



The Pageant

Charles Hazelwood Shannon, Gleeson White, Sir Max Beerbohm, Robert Seymour Bridges, Thomas Sturge Moore, ...

THE PAGEANT

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☛ THE MAGDALENE AT THE HOUSE OF
SIMON THE PHARISEE
by
Dante Gabriel Rossetti



☛ A ROUNDEL OF RABELAIS

THELEME is afar on the waters, adrift and afar,
Afar and afloat on the waters that flicker and gleam,
And we feel but her fragrance and see but the shadows that mar
Theleme.

In the sun-coloured mists of the sunrise and sunset that steam
As incense from urns of the twilight, her portals ajar
Let pass as a shadow the light or the sound of a dream.

But the laughter that rings from her cloisters that know not a bar
So kindles delight in desire that the souls in us deem
He erred not, the seer who discerned on the seas as a star
Theleme.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

☛ It is particularly requested that this poem should not be quoted as a whole in any publication.

A

COSTELLO THE PROUD, OONA MACDERMOTT, AND THE BITTER TONGUE



COSTELLO had come up from the fields, and lay upon the ground before the door of his square tower, supporting his head upon his hands, looking at the sunset, and considering the chances of the weather. Though the customs of Elizabeth and James, now going out of fashion in England, had begun to prevail among the gentry, he still wore the great cloak of the native Irishry; and the sensitive outlines of his face and the greatness of his indolent body showed a commingling of pride and strength which belonged to a simpler age. His eyes strayed in a little from the sunset to where the long white road lost itself over the south-western horizon, and then falling, lit upon a horseman who toiled slowly up the hill. A few more minutes and the horseman was near enough for his little and shapeless body, his long Irish cloak and the dilapidated bagpipes hanging from his shoulders, and the rough-haired garron under him, to stand out distinctly in the gathering greyness. So soon as he had come within earshot he began crying in Gaelic,

‘Is it sleeping you are, Tumaus Costello, while better folk break their hearts on the great white roads? Listen to me, Tumaus Costello the Proud, for I come out of Coolavin, and bring a message from Oona MacDermott, and it is the good pay I must have, for the saddle was bitter under me.’

He was close to the door by now, and began slowly dismounting, cursing the while by God, and Bridget and the devil; for riding in all weathers from wake to wedding and wedding to wake had made him rheumatic. Costello had risen to his feet, and was fumbling at the mouth of the leather bag, in which he carried his money, but it was some time before it would open, for the hand that had thrown so many in wrestling shook with excitement.

‘Here is all the money in my bag,’ he said, at last dropping a stream of French and Spanish silver into the hand of the piper. ‘I got it for a heifer down at Ballysumaghan last week!’ The other bit a shilling between his teeth, and went on,

‘And it is the good protection I must have, for if the MacDermotts lay their hands upon me in any borean after sundown, or in Coolavin
by

by broad day, I will be flung among the nettles in a ditch, or hanged upon the sycamore, where they hanged the horse thieves out by Leitram last Great Beltan four years !' And while he spoke he tied the reins of his garron to a bar of rusty iron that was mortared into the wall.

'I will make you my piper and my body servant,' said Costello, 'and no man dare lay hands upon the man or the goat, or the horse or the dog protected by Tumaus Costello.'

'And I will only tell my message,' said the other flinging the saddle on the ground, 'in the corner of the chimney with a noggin of Spanish ale in my hand, and a jug of Spanish ale beside me, for though I am ragged and empty my forbears were well clothed and full until their house was burnt, and their cattle harried in the time of Cathal of the Red Hand by the Dillons, whom I shall yet see on the hob of hell, and they screeching,' and while he spoke the little eyes gleamed and the thin hands clenched.

Costello brought him into the great rush-strewn hall where were none of the comforts which had begun to grow common among the gentry, but a feudal gauntness and bareness, and led him to the bench in the great chimney ; and when he had sat down, filled up a horn noggin, and set it on the bench beside him, and set a great black-jack of leather beside the noggin, and lit a torch that slanted out from a ring in the wall, his hands trembling the while ; and then turned towards him and said,

'Will Oona MacDermott come to me, Dualloch O'Daly of the Pipes?'

'Oona MacDermott will not come to you, for her father, Teig MacDermott of the Sheep, has set women to watch her, but she bid me tell you that this day sennight will be the eve of St. John and the night of her betrothal to Macnamara of the Lake, and she would have you there, that, when they bid her drink to him she loves best, as the way is, she may drink to you, oh Tumaus Costello, and let all know where her heart is and how little of gladness is in her marrying : and I myself bid you go with good men about you, for I saw the horse thieves with my own eyes, and they dancing the blue pigeon in the air.' And then he held the now empty noggin towards Costello, his hand closing round it like the claw of a bird, and cried,

'Fill my noggin again, for I would the day had come when all the water in the world is to shrink into a periwinkle shell, that I might drink nothing but the poteen.' Finding that Costello made no reply, but sat in a dream, he burst out,

'Fill my noggin, I tell you, for no Costello is so great in the world that

that he should not wait upon an O'Daly, even though the O'Daly travel the road with his pipes and the Costello have a bare hill, an empty house, a horse, a herd of goats and a handful of cows.'

'Praise the O'Dalys if you will,' said Costello as he filled the noggin, 'for you have brought me a kind word from my love.'

For the next few days Duallach went hither and thither, trying to raise a body guard; and every man he met had some story of Costello, how he killed the wrestler, when but a boy, by so straining at the belt, that went about them both, that he broke the back of his opponent; how, when somewhat older, he dragged the fierce horses of the Dunns of Shancough through a ford in the Unchion for a wager; how, when he came to maturity, he broke the steel horse shoe in Mayo; how he drove many men before him through Drumlease and Cloonbougher and Drumahair, because of a malevolent song they had about his poverty; and of many another deed of his strength and pride; but he could find none who would trust themselves with any so passionate and poor in a quarrel with careful and wealthy persons, like MacDermott of the Sheep, and Macnamara of the Lake.

Then Costello went out himself, and, after listening to many excuses and in many places, brought in a big half-witted fellow who followed him like a dog, a farm labourer who worshipped him for his strength, a fat farmer whose forefathers had served his family, and a couple of lads who looked after his goats and cows, and marshalled them before the fire in the empty hall. They had brought with them their stout alpeens, and Costello gave them an old pistol a-piece, and kept them all night drinking Spanish ale, and shooting at a white turnip which he pinned against the wall with a skewer. O'Daly sat on the bench in the chimney playing 'The Green Bunch of Rushes,' 'The Unchion Stream,' and 'The Princes of Beffeny' on his old pipes, and railing now at the appearance of the shooters, now at their clumsy shooting, and now at Costello because he had no better servants. The labourer, the half-witted fellow, the farmer and the lads were all well accustomed to O'Daly's unquenchable railing, for it was as inseparable from wake or wedding as the squealing of his pipes, but they wondered at the forbearance of Costello, who seldom came either to wake or wedding, and, if he had, would scarce have been patient with a scolding piper.

On the next evening they set out for Coolavin, Costello riding a tolerable horse and carrying a sword, the others upon rough haired garrons,

garrons, and with their stout alpeens under their arms. As they rode over the bogs, and in the boreens among the hills, they could see fire answering fire from hill to hill, from horizon to horizon, and everywhere groups who danced in the ruddy light of the turf, celebrating the bridal of life and fire. When they came to MacDermott's house they saw before the door an unusually large group of the very poor, dancing about a fire, in the midst of which was a blazing cartwheel, that circular dance which is so ancient that the gods, long dwindled to be but fairies, dance no other in their secret places. From the door, and through the long loop-holes on either side, came the pale light of candles, and the sound of many feet dancing a dance of Elizabeth and James.

They tied their horses to bushes, for the number so tied already showed that the stables were full, and shoved their way through a crowd of peasants who stood about the door, and went into the great hall where the dance was. The labourer, the half-witted fellow, the farmer, and the two lads mixed with a group of servants, who were looking on from an alcove, and Duallach sat with the pipers on their bench; but Costello made his way through the dancers to where MacDermott of the Sheep stood with Macnamara of the Lake, pouring poteen out of a porcelain jug into horn noggins with silver rims.

'Tumaus Costello,' said the old man, 'you have done a good deed to forget what has been, and to fling away enmity and come to the betrothal of my daughter to Macnamara of the Lake.'

'I come,' answered Costello, 'because, when in the time of Eoha of the Heavy Sighs my forbears overcame your forbears, and afterwards made peace, a compact was made that a Costello might go with his body servants and his piper to every feast given by a MacDermott for ever, and a MacDermott with his body servants and his piper to every feast given by a Costello for ever.'

'If you come with evil thoughts and armed men,' said MacDermott flushing, 'no matter how strong your hands to wrestle and to swing the sword, it shall go badly with you, for some of my wife's clan have come out of Mayo, and my three brothers and their servants have come down from the Mountains of the Ox,' and while he spoke he kept his hand inside his coat as though upon the handle of a weapon.

'No,' answered Costello, 'I but come to dance a farewell dance with your daughter.'

MacDermott drew his hand out of his coat and went over to a tall pale

pale girl who had been standing a little way off for the last few moments, with her mild eyes fixed upon the ground.

'Costello has come to dance a farewell dance, for he knows that you will never see one another again.'

The girl lifted her eyes and gazed at Costello, and in her gaze was that trust of the humble in the proud, the gentle in the violent, which has been the tragedy of woman from the beginning. Costello led her among the dancers, and they were soon absorbed in the rhythm of the Pavane, that stately dance which, with the Saraband, the Gallead, and the Morrice dances, had driven out, among all but the most Irish of the gentry, the quicker rhythms of the verse-interwoven, pantomimic dances of earlier days; and while they danced came over them the unutterable melancholy, the weariness with the world, the poignant and bitter pity, the vague anger against common hopes and fears, which is the exultation of love. And when a dance ended and the pipers laid down their pipes and lifted their horn noggins, they stood a little from the others, waiting pensively and silently for the dance to begin again and the fire in their hearts to leap up and to wrap them anew; and so they danced and danced through Pavane and Saraband and Gallead the night through, and many stood still to watch them, and the peasants came about the door and peered in, as though they understood that they would gather their children's children about them long hence, and tell how they had seen Costello dance with Oona MacDermott, and become, by the telling, themselves a portion of ancient romance; but through all the dancing and piping Macnamara of the Lake went hither and thither talking loudly and making foolish jokes, that all might seem well with him, and old MacDermott of the Sheep grew redder and redder, and looked oftener and oftener at the doorway to see if the candles there grew yellow in the dawn.

At last he saw that the moment to end had come, and, in a pause after a dance, cried out from where the horn noggins stood, that his daughter would now drink the cup of betrothal; then Oona came over to where he was, and the guests stood round in a half circle, Costello close to the wall to the right, and the labourer, the farmer, the half-witted man, and the two farm lads close behind. The old man took out of a niche in the wall the silver cup, from which her mother and her mother's mother had drunk the toasts of their betrothals, and poured into it a little of the poteen out of a porcelain jug, and handed it to his daughter with the customary words, 'Drink to him whom you love the best.'

She

She held the cup to her lips for a moment, and then said in a clear, soft voice,

‘I drink to my true love, Tumaus Costello.’

And then the cup rolled over and over on the ground, ringing like a bell, for the old man had struck her in the face, and it had fallen in her confusion ; and there was a deep silence. There were many of Macnamara's people among the servants, now come out of the alcove, and one of them, a story teller and poet, a last remnant of the bardic order, who had a chair and a platter in Macnamara's kitchen, drew a French knife out of his girdle, and made as though he would strike at Costello, but in a moment a blow had hurled him on the ground, his shoulder sending the cup rolling and ringing again. The click of steel had followed quickly had not there come a muttering and shouting from the peasants about the door, and from those crowding up behind them ; and all knew that these were no children of Queen's Irish or friendly Macnamaras and MacDermotts, but wild Lavells and Quinns and Dunns from about Lough Garra, who rowed their skin coracles, and had masses of hair over their eyes, and left the right arms of their children unchristened, that they might give the stouter blows, and swore only by St. Atty and sun and moon, and worshipped beauty and strength more than St. Atty or sun and moon.

Costello's hand had rested upon the handle of his sword, and his knuckles had grown white, but now he drew it away, and, followed by those who were with him, strode towards the door, the dancers giving before him, the most angrily and slowly and with glances at the muttering and shouting peasants, but some gladly and quickly because the glory of his fame was over him ; and passed through the fierce and friendly peasant faces, and came where his good horse and the rough-haired garrons were tied to bushes ; and mounted and bade his ungainly body-guard mount also, and rode into the narrow borreen. When they had gone a little way, Duallach, who rode last, turned towards the house where a little group of MacDermotts and Macnamaras stood next to a far more numerous group of peasants, and cried,

‘Well do you deserve, Teig MacDermott, to be as you are this hour, a lantern without a candle, a purse without a penny, a sheep without wool, for your hand was ever niggardly to piper and fiddler and story teller and to poor travelling folk.’ He had not done before the three old MacDermotts from the Mountains of the Ox had run towards their horses, and old MacDermott himself had caught the bridle of a garron

garron of the Macnamaras, and was calling to others to follow him ; and many blows and many deaths had been, had not the Lavells and Dunns and Quinns caught up still glowing brands from the ashes of the fire, and hurled them among the horses with loud cries, making all plunge and rear, and some break from their owners with the whites of their eyes gleaming in the dawn.

For the next few weeks Costello had no lack of news of Oona, for now a woman selling eggs or fowls, and now a man or a woman on pilgrimage to the holy well of Tubbernalty, would tell him how his love had fallen ill the day after St. John's Eve, and how she was a little better or a little worse, as it might be ; and though he looked to his horses and his cows and goats as usual, the common and uncomely things, the dust upon the roads, the songs of men returning from fairs and wakes, men playing cards in the corners of fields on Sundays and Saints' Days, the rumours of battles and changes in the great world, the deliberate purposes of those about him, troubled him with an inexplicable trouble ; but the peasants still remember how when night had fallen he would bid Duallach O'Daly recite, to the chirping of the crickets, 'The Son of Apple,' 'The Beauty of the World,' 'The Feast of Bricriu,' or some other of those traditional tales, which were as much a piper's business as 'The Green Bunch of Rushes,' 'The Unchion Stream,' or 'The Chiefs of Breffany' ; and, while the boundless and phantasmal world of the legends was a-building, would abandon himself to the dreams of his sorrow.

Duallach would often pause to tell how the Lavells or Dunns or Quinns or O'Dalys, or other tribe near his heart, had come from some Lu, god of the leaping lightning, or incomparable King of the Blue Belt or Warrior of the Ozier Wattle, or to tell with many railings how all the strangers and most of the Queen's Irish were the seed of some misshapen and horned Fomoroh or servile and creeping Firbolg ; but Costello cared only for the love sorrows, and no matter whither the stories wandered, whether to the Isle of the Red Loch where the blessed are, or to the malign country of the Hag of the East, Oona alone endured their shadowy hardships ; for it was she, and no King's daughter of old, who was hidden in the steel tower under the water with the folds of the Worm of Nine Eyes round and about her prison ; and it was she who won, by seven years of service, the right to deliver from hell all she could carry, and carried away multitudes clinging with worn fingers to the hem of her dress ; and it was she who endured dumbness for a year
because

because of the little thorn of enchantment the fairies had thrust into her tongue ; and it was a lock of her hair, coiled in a little carved box, which gave so great a light that men threshed by it from sundown to sunrise, and awoke so great a wonder that kings spent years in wandering, or fell before unknown armies in seeking, to discover her hiding place ; for there was no beauty in the world but hers, no tragedy in the world but hers : and when at last the voice of the piper, grown gentle with the wisdom or old romance, was silent, and his rheumatic steps had toiled upstairs and to bed, and Costello had dipped his fingers into the little delf font of holy water, and begun to pray to Maurya of the Seven Sorrows, the blue eyes and star-covered dress of the painting in the chapel faded from his imagination, and the brown eyes and homespun dress of Oona MacDermott came in their stead ; for there was no tenderness in the world but hers. He was of those ascetics of passion who keep their hearts pure for love or for hatred, as other men for God, for Mary and for the saints, and who, when the hour of their visitation arrives, come to the Divine Essence by the bitter tumult, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the desolate rood, ordained for immortal passions in mortal hearts.

One day a serving man rode up to Costello, who was helping his two lads to reap a meadow, gave him a letter and rode away without a word ; and the letter contained these words in English : 'Tumaus Costello, my daughter is very ill. The wise woman from Knock-na-shee has seen her, and says she will die unless you come to her. I therefore bid you to her, whose peace you stole by treachery—Teig MacDermott.'

Costello threw down his scythe, sent one of the lads for Duallach, who had become associated in his mind with Oona, and himself saddled his great horse and Duallach's garron.

When they came to MacDermott's house it was late afternoon, and Lough Garra lay down below them, blue, mirrorlike, and deserted ; and though they had seen, when at a distance, dark figures moving about the door, the house appeared not less deserted than the lake. The door stood half-open, and Costello rapped upon it again and again, making a number of lake gulls fly up out of the grass, and circle screaming over his head, but there was no answer.

'There is no one here,' said Duallach, 'for MacDermott of the Sheep is too proud to welcome Costello the Proud,' and, flinging the door open, showed a ragged, dirty, and very ancient woman, who sat upon the floor leaning against the wall. Costello recognised Bridget Delaney, a deaf

and dumb beggar ; and she, when she saw him, stood up, made a sign to him to follow, and led him and his companion up a stair and down a long corridor to a closed door. She pushed the door open, and went a little way off and sat down as before. Duallach sat upon the ground also, but close to the door, and Costello went and gazed upon Oona MacDermott asleep upon a bed. He sat upon a chair beside her and waited, and a long time passed, and still she slept on, and then Duallach motioned to him through the door to wake her, but he hushed his very breath that she might sleep on, for his heart was full of that ungovernable pity which makes the fading heart of the lover a shadow of the divine heart. Presently he returned to Duallach and said,

'It is not right that I stay here where there are none of her kindred, for the common people are ever ready to blame the beautiful.' And then they went down and stood at the door of the house and waited, but the evening wore on and no one came.

'It was a foolish man that called you Costello the Proud,' Duallach cried at last ; 'had he seen you waiting and waiting where they left none but a beggar to welcome you, it is Costello the Humble he would have called you.'

Then Costello mounted and Duallach mounted, but when they had ridden a little way, Costello tightened the reins and made his horse stand still. Many minutes passed, and then Duallach cried,

'It is no wonder that you fear to offend Teig MacDermott of the Sheep, for he has many brothers and friends, and though he is old he is a strong man, and ready with his hands.'

And Costello answered, flushing and looking towards the house :

'I swear by Maurya of the Seven Sorrows that I will never return there again if they do not send after me before I pass the ford in the Donogue,' and he rode on, but so very slowly, that the sun went down and the bats began to fly over the bogs. When he came to the river he lingered a while upon the bank among the purple flag-flowers, but presently rode out into the middle, and stopped his horse in a foaming shallow. Duallach, however, crossed over and waited on the further bank above a deeper place. After a good while, Duallach cried out again, and this time very bitterly :

'It was a fool who begot you and a fool who bore you, and they are fools of all fools who say you come of an old and noble stock, for you come of whey-faced beggars, who travelled from door to door, bowing to gentles and to serving men.'

With bent head Costello rode through the river and stood beside him,

him, and would have spoken had not hoofs clattered on the further bank and a horseman splashed towards them. It was a serving man of Teig MacDermott's, and he said, speaking breathlessly like one who had ridden hard,

'Tumaus Costello, I come to bid you again to Teig MacDermott's. When you had gone, Oona MacDermott awoke and called your name, for you had been in her dreams. Bridget Delancy, the dummy, saw her lips move and the trouble upon her, and came where we were hiding in the wood above the house, and took Teig MacDermott by the coat and brought him to his daughter. He saw the trouble upon her, and bid me ride his own horse to bring you the quicker.'

Then Costello turned towards the piper Duallach O'Daly, and, taking him about the waist, lifted him out of the saddle, and hurled him against a grey rock that rose up out of the river, so that he fell lifeless into the deep place, and the waters swept over the tongue which God had made bitter that there might be a story in men's ears in after time; and plunging his spurs into the horse, he rode away furiously towards the north-west, along the edge of the river, and did not pause until he came to another and smoother ford and saw the rising moon mirrored in the water. He paused for a moment irresolute, and then rode into the ford and on over the Mountains of the Ox, and down towards the sea, his eyes almost continually resting upon the moon, which glimmered in the dimness like a great white rose hung on the lattice of some boundless and phantasmal world. But now his horse, long dank with sweat and breathing hard, for he kept spurring it to utmost speed, fell heavily, hurling him into the grass at the road side. He tried to make it stand up, and, failing this, went on alone towards the moonlight; and came to the sea, and saw a schooner lying there at anchor. Now that he could go no further because of the sea, he found that he was very tired and the night very cold, and went into a shebeen close to the shore, and threw himself down upon a bench. The room was full of Spanish and Irish sailors, who had just smuggled a cargo of wine and ale, and were waiting a favourable wind to set out again. A Spaniard offered him a drink in bad Gaelic. He drank it greedily, and began talking wildly and rapidly.

For some three weeks the wind blew still inshore or with too great violence, and the sailors stayed, drinking and talking and playing cards, and Costello stayed with them, sleeping upon a bench in the shebeen, and drinking and talking and playing more than any. He soon lost what little money he had, and then his horse, which some one had brought

from

from the mountain breen, to a Spaniard, who sold it to a farmer from the mountains for a score of silver crowns, and then his long cloak and his spurs and his boots of soft leather. At last a gentle wind blew towards Spain, and the crew rowed out to their schooner singing Gaelic and Spanish songs, and lifted the anchor, and in a little the white sails had dropped under the horizon. Then Costello turned homeward, his empty life gaping before him, and walked all day, coming in the early evening to the road that went from near Lough Garra to the southern edge of Lough Cay. Here he overtook a great crowd of peasants and farmers, who were walking very slowly after two priests, and a group of well dressed persons who were carrying a coffin. He stopped an old man and asked whose burying it was and whose people they were, and the old man answered,

'It is the burying of Oona MacDermott, and we are the Macnamaras and the MacDermotts and their following, and you are Tumaus Costello who murdered her.'

Costello went on towards the head of the procession, passing men who looked at him with fierce eyes, and only vaguely understanding what he had heard, for, now that he had lost the quick apprehension of perfect health, it seemed impossible that a gentleness and a beauty which had been so long the world's heart could pass away. Presently he stopped and asked again whose burying it was, and a man answered,

'We are carrying Oona MacDermott, whom you murdered, to be buried in the island of the Holy Trinity,' and the man stooped and picked up a stone and cast it at Costello, striking him on the cheek, and making the blood flow out over his face. Costello went on scarcely feeling the blow, and, coming to those about the coffin, shouldered his way into the midst of them, and, laying his hand upon the coffin, asked in a loud voice,

'Who is in this coffin?'

The three old MacDermotts from the Mountains of the Ox caught up stones and bid those about them do the same; and he was driven from the road covered with wounds, and but for the priests would surely have been killed.

When the procession had passed on Costello began to follow again, and saw from a distance the coffin laid upon a large boat and those about it get into other boats and the boats move slowly over the water to Insula Trinitatis; and after a time he saw the boats return and their passengers mingle with the crowd upon the bank and all disperse by many

many roads and boreens. It seemed to him that Oona was somewhere on the island smiling gently as of old, and, when all had gone, he swam in the way the boats had been rowed and found the new-made grave beside the ruined Abbey of the Trinity, and threw himself upon it, calling to Oona to come to him. Above him the three-cornered leaves of the ivy trembled, and all about him white moths moved over white flowers and sweet odours drifted through the dim air.

He lay there all that night and through the day after, from time to time calling her to come to him, but when the third night came he had forgotten, worn out with hunger and sorrow, that her body lay in the earth beneath; and only knew she was somewhere near and would not come to him.

Just before dawn, the hour when the peasants hear his ghostly voice crying out, his pride awoke and he called loudly,

'Oona MacDermott, if you do not come to me I will go and never return to the island of the Holy Trinity;' and, before his voice had died away, a cold and whirling wind had swept over the island, and he saw many figures rushing past, women of the Shée with crowns of silver and dim floating drapery; and then Oona MacDermott, but no longer smiling gently, for she passed him swiftly and angrily, and as she passed struck him upon the face crying,

'Then go and never return.'

He would have followed and was calling out her name, when the whole glimmering company rose up into the air, and, rushing together into the shape of a great silvery rose, faded into the ashen dawn.

Costello got up from the grave, understanding nothing but that he had made his beloved angry, and that she wished him to go, and, wading out into the lake, began to swim. He swam on and on, but his limbs were too weary to keep him long afloat, and her anger was heavy about him, and, when he had gone a little way, he sank without a struggle like a man passing into sleep and dreams.

The next day a poor fisherman found him among the reeds upon the lake shore, lying upon the white lake sand with his arms flung out as though he lay upon a rood, and carried him to his own house. And the very poor lamented over him and sang the keen, and, when the time had come, laid him in the Abbey on *Insula Trinitatis* with only the ruined altar between him and Oona MacDermott, and planted above them two ash trees that in after days wove their branches together and mingled their trembling leaves.

W. B. YEATS.

M O N N A R O S A

ELLE est seule au boudoir
 En bandeaux d'or liquide,
 En robe d'or fluide
 Sur fond blanc dans le soir
 Teinté d'or vert et noir.

Un pot bleu japonise
 Délicieusement
 Dont s'élance gaiment
 Dans l'atmosphère exquise
 Où l'âme s'adonise

Un flot mélodieux
 Selon le rythme juste—
 De roses, cœur auguste,
 Bouquet insidieux
 Au conseil radieux !

Elle, belle comme elles,
 Les roses, n'élit plus
 Dans ses cheveux élus
 Qu'une de ces fleurs belles
 Comme elle, et de ciseaux
 Prestes, tels des oiseaux,

La coupe ou, mieux, la cuille
 Avec le soin charmant
 D'y laisser joliment
 La grâce d'une feuille
 Verte comme le soir
 Noir et or du boudoir.

Cependant

☛ MONNA ROSA
by
Dante Gabriel Rossetti



Cependant que persiste
La splendeur, à côté,
Du plumage bleuté
De l'orgueil, qui s'attriste,
D'un paon jadis vainqueur
Aux jardins de ce cœur.

PAUL VERLAINE.

PARIS, *Sept.* 1895.

NIGGARD TRUTH



HARRIET came of farmers. The stout race hesitated and hoped in the strong girl; at last, for she never had any children, finished with her. Her mother had followed Whitefield, and Harriet held to the new Protestantism; the men, decidedly retrograde here, were all for Pope Denys. At the time when Harriet first had a real existence, symbolism might have called the grand-dad Silenus, the father Gambrinus, the brother Dionysos. These drank and drank; oftenest in their own complete and scandalous company; but at all times they drank. She said nothing, there being nothing to say. Their cult brought her a new, at times harassing, duty: to see them laid out all three at night in the warm kitchen, their cravats loosened, and the fire safe extinguished. The disgrace of her family added little in the country to her own disgrace of Methodism. Her friends the Methodists found nothing surprising in the unregenerate state of men who had not come under the only possible saving influence. The farm went on, in a fashion, thanks to Harriet. Had she been less active and intelligent than she was, she might have managed it to profit, and her kinsmen might have been her terrible luxury. Her activity never hesitated to carry out what a servant did other than to her liking. Whatever her hands touched was a pattern. Yes; but the servants—especially as she was kind, and often, of necessity, ignorant—pandered to her mania to do her own work herself. The farm, too much for her, had at last to be let to keep up the mortgages.

They had been rich, now they were poor. Harriet had nothing in her hands but work and care. The 'pretty trio' had the management of all else; their management followed its policy unhesitatingly to the logical end. Then the father and the brother died, and were buried. Silenus, missing them, became idiotic and eccentric. He took liquor in sudden aversion as a beverage; but, buying and getting what he could, he bottled and sealed drams which he buried all over the country; and then, like a dog who would know how his hidden bone putrefies, he visited all the nooks strangely, staying out at night even to follow his poor fancy.

Harriet never ceased to work, either for gain and living, or for mere work's

work's sake. Once she had to repair her stays; she remade them. A neighbour saw, admired, and had her own renewed. Another and another commission, and Harriet was proficient with a definite occupation. She knew not how to mark time. Before long she had discovered an 'improvement' which made her wares famous, which later she sold for a hardly bargained £600. She had her consolation in the great days of the patent, that she had fought hard for a good price, bumpkin girl as she was at the time of the sale.

Old Silenus died at last. Harriet, under contract to refrain from staymaking, was busy as ever with some equally ingenious labour. She never stopped to visit or idle, only going out to attend the offices of her church, or rather 'chapel.' There she was most punctual; the chapel's life coincided evenly with hers.

The first time the new minister preached, Harriet selected him for a husband. It was Hugh Porter, the young man who came in the face of so many prejudices, being so young, and ugliness not compensating as much as it should. He had once had a kick in the face from a horse, whence a hideous malformation. He preached for an opening with more than passion, with violence. Afterwards, and for many weeks, he was quiet, learned. Harriet watched him carefully; compared, heard him critically; at first thought him tactful, executing a plan; only found out later that it was all accident, that the heaviness of his beginnings was but nervous defiance and waste of ammunition. The sooner he had a calm friend at his elbow the better for him; and in addition she made a memorandum in her mind—for use in their married life, recognising a radical fault.

They became acquainted. Harriet was very submissive to her 'minister,' without shyness; in such a way that, in presence of her humility and deference, he forgot his regret that he was not a clergyman. She did not mind his lack of judgment; he would have many other lessons to learn. She took no umbrage at the rude way in which he set about his 'inquiries' into the conduct of her secluded life; and he thought himself so wise in this inquisition.

'I never thought I should marry my minister.' The pitch of her voice, the smile, the gravity which made her face look thinner as she said these words, almost gave him a glimpse of the future; but the marriage took place. It was soon found that he was extremely delicate. And the course of what are called unforeseen circumstances turned strangely from the time of Hugh Porter's marriage. Under-
hand

hand measures on the part of his deacons threw him out, made him redundant for a time, obliged to preach every Sunday from a different pulpit. Then it was he began to understand Harriet. Then, for the first time in his life, he wrote out his sermons^s entire, and again and again. Then, to patience and kindness in Harriet, he rehearsed delivery at oration pitch, and noted gesture. Shrewd Harriet! He took her advice, and refused the first offer of a pulpit as second in a circuit, alleging that he had some intention of going into a retreat, like Saint Paul into Arabia. In three months, the fame of his preaching was ringing every week in *The Recorder*. Then a remarkable event, what in business is called a 'deal,' took place between the Wesleyans and the Methodists. A curious notion of Pan-Methodism was abroad, and a minister was exchanged for a great occasion in either body. Hugh Porter was to preach in the great Walworth Road Church in London—to Wesleyans. Harriet was present, in a place where Hugh could not see her. She heard his very low yet distinct preliminary announcement: 'My text will be found. . . .' Right! And then she waited for the opening phrase, almost performing mentally the process of sounding a tuning-fork. Right again! And he kept it up; he showed what was in him. Higher and higher the flood of his oration swelled, and ever the language grew more precise, the argument stricter. Till the last sentences came, sinking masterly to the tone on which he began, and the closing words sounded sweet and distinct as the first. He took the beef-tea she offered him in the vestry in silence. Harriet could not trust herself to speak, for joy.

The Recorder, a well-managed paper, knowing the thoroughness of the Wesleyan organ, came out on Wednesday, not only with the sermon at length, but with a leading article upon it, headed: '*That Man!*' the phrase Hugh Porter had used and repeated with such great effect. This moment began Hugh's life, though he had had a hard boyhood and harder youth. He thought he had known struggling. He found out what struggling means before he had learnt from Harriet where he stood towards his body and towards the world. She had even in her extremity to use for the first time to him the words: 'Take *my* advice.' He had the wit to be wise. He had imagined, when he secured the wealthiest chapel in the Society, that the millennium for him had come; that he had now only to enjoy his income, have a library, go out to tea, embroil himself with all the quarrels of the laity under him, and be master in his own house and out of it.

The

The time he gave to his sophistries, otherwise directed, might have made him half independent of Harriet; and than this he desired nothing more dearly. He wanted to love her and direct her. He aimed higher than he ever reached.

As it was, he held himself very quiet; it seemed Harriet did not make mistakes. The jealousies were not long appearing; the mutterings against ministers who interfere; the covert wonderings what he did with his income. It was hard for Hugh. His policy towards the members was not of his own invention; he carried it out mechanically, awkwardly; feared all the time it was right, the only policy. He never refused invitations to preach out of his own circuit, by Harriet's advice. And let him not misunderstand: his sermons were to be staid, even dull, on no account sensational. He did as he was bidden. Reasons for all this? A dozen times he had almost asked: 'And what then?' Well that he checked himself. As it happened, it never came to such a question, but how shocked Harriet would have been! How could she have told him what might be the Lord's inscrutable will?

Once, vague gratitude supplanting perplexity, he was nigh thanking her watchfulness. He put down his awful commentary, and pretended to yawn. Harriet looked up with anxiety. (She was making a pair of stays.)

'Well, my Hugh, what is it?' He sighed a little, and smiled 'My poor Hugh is looking tired.'

'No, Harriet,' he said sententiously, as though giving out a hymn, 'not tired.'

'Shall we talk then?' and with that dawned the most terrible hour Hugh had ever known; hour which set stormily, misty, and blurred with tears. In brief, he must resign, give up his chapel. He was stupid, mouth agog, when he caught the intention of her slow, hard sentences. She was mad; he said so, at last, after repeatedly checking the words on his lips. She gave no heed, made no answer; her calm no whit ruffled. He could not help himself; he thought it seriously. Through the torrents of his objections to each deliberate phrase he followed his thought: the possibility that she was a wild woman; like the mad, gifted with supernatural penetration.

Give up his 'position'? Give up his thirty pounds a quarter?

'Oh, Hugh, Hugh!'

And their little house, so comfortable, with fitted blinds all through;
to

to go to some miserable place in the country, perhaps! Useless to talk; he knew this fully ten minutes before he ceased to be coherent. The circuit was too large for him. His early years had been passed in the country: it would do him good if he were sent back to it.

Nothing was said next day. It was a Wednesday; and a committee meeting after the service. Harriet did not wait for Hugh in the chapel as her custom was. She simply told him, as she gave him his comforter, that she had something to do; must go home.

The committee meeting began as usual with a prayer by the eldest of the deacons. This ceremony passed drily. Hugh proceeded at once to run over the accounts; threw the book on the table as he finished. There was the shadow of a pause.

'And now, *gentlemen*,' said Hugh, 'I have something to tell you, something which lies so heavily on my heart that I shall be easier when I have told it: it seems the Lord's will that I should leave this circuit. The circuit is large, my health is far from good, and I do not flatter myself that you will have a great difficulty to fill my place. I hope you will be able to say, gentlemen, that I have been a good minister among you here present as deacons, and among you all as members.' He finished, much moved.

'You are young, sir, to be our minister here . . .' began a younger deacon.

'Think it over a bit, sir,' the *doyen* broke in, roughly. 'I propose a committee meeting this day week, while you think it over, sir.'

'No, my brethren,' said Hugh, more humanly. 'It is thought over already. I did not come here myself; I did not seek to come here. He who sent me hither now sends me hence. If we are allowed to exercise our judgment, minister and members, in coming together, we must recognise His will above it all. I have to ask your permission to resign.'

'Which we all refuse.'

'No, brother, it need not take long; talk it over here and now. You will find me in the chapel when your decision is taken.' He suited his action by leaving the vestry.

They accepted his resignation.

Hugh had a moment of satisfaction as he walked home. This hearty, blunt action of his came at the moment when a long-nursed grumble of his deacons was about finding vent. But his joy was not long-lived.

'I have resigned,' said Hugh. 'The circuit is large, I don't say too large, but they want mere age in their minister, these people.'

For this announcement, he tried his uttermost to speak without expression, to leave Harriet in doubt whether he sulked or not. A touch of her fingers was all Harriet's reply; save that she was very motherly that night, appearing almost in a new aspect.

Hugh was sent to a small west-country village, or rather to two villages, four miles apart. The Porters found a roomy bright house for them, rented by the Society, with a certain quantity of solid furniture in it. They felt quite wealthy when they were installed. The only difficulty was the distances to travel. This was soon felt heavily, for Hugh began to be suffering and more delicate from the first week. He lost his spirits, his appetite; grew restless at night. Harriet kept her head through this trouble; she knew almost all it was necessary for her to know, to guard him and tend him well. But there remained between them want of familiarity. When his ailing was so far confirmed that he could look upon it as a definite and more or less permanent thing, Hugh became nervous on the subject lest Harriet might think he was malingering. She knew this anxiety of his; for once was baffled, not knowing how to reassure him.

Harriet urged her husband to take some pupils, to *amuse* him. Two boys were found, of eight and eleven. After a week Hugh refused to have anything to do with them. Harriet added to her tasks of feeding and grooming, that of training them. These boys turned out wonderfully well. Harriet saw each of them make a fortune in business.

Time came when Hugh left his wife for a whole week, to conduct a 'revival' at Bristol. When he came back, a shed adjoining the house had become a stable; the stable contained a mare. He gave himself over to surprise and delight. It so astonished him that Harriet had found such a smart, useful animal, that he forgot to ask what had been the price of her; and he never knew. The pleasure of his new plaything made Hugh seem his old self for a time. It was a joy to see him grooming the mare, spreading her litter, feeding her. At length, inevitably, came weariness of the work: the trouble of it spoilt the advantage and pleasure of riding; Harriet was forced into suggesting a man to take this duty off Hugh's hands. Henceforth a man was supposed to attend to the mare. Hugh never saw this man, nor did he ever make any inquiry concerning him. One thing remained, for nearly a twelvemonth at least: the distance between village and village

was

was no excuse between Hugh and the fulfilment of his duties. Of course, this had to come in the end. It began with obstinacy to go to the neighbouring village on nights so awful that scarce ten souls would be assembled for his ministrations in the chill shed they called a chapel; that, too, at times when his cough was deep, shaking his poor body, so hidden inside the inches of woollens and cloth in which Harriet kept him swathed. Then clear, sheer laziness, variously disguised or perfectly frank. Harriet soon exhausted what few words of persuasion she could afford for such extremities, and passed without pause to acts. The occasion was repeated when Hugh was disinclined to go take his service, away over the heath. No word; Harriet was up to her room and down again in five minutes.

'Hugh, I shall be there before you,' the thin woman's voice piped cheerily, and she was out of the house. A mile and a half of wet road, and Hugh passed her at a trot; she let the hoof-strokes die quite away, then, with unaltered brisk step, turned about towards their home; she had so much to do in the house!

So Hugh grew more and more a child as he aged and shrunk. This in his mere personal manliness, for to the outside he was more and more each year the image of the ideal Harriet had set for him, though all their life she had never so much as said to him: 'I am ambitious for you.' In town or country pupils were always passing through his house to success in the ministry, in business, and professions. He edited *Hugh Bourne*, and had heard of Fox and William Law. He composed test papers for sprouting divinity. Above all, he preached through the length and breadth of England; few preachers of the denomination were more sought. A wretched block, which the enterprising *Recorder* had had cut from a photograph of him, went the round of the Methodist press for years.

The Porters hardly took count of time. Their life together had been so long. The history of the world was narrowed for them into the span of their married life. Years were passing, though they seemed to stand still. Not only was Mrs. Porter grown the thinnest woman imaginable, and her thin voice incredibly thinner, and more quavering almost than a voice can be; but Sophy, Mrs. Porter's cousin, had become Miss Short, and staid at that.

It was at a period when, for the first time, she had the care of six pupils. Harriet dearly wanted a female in her house who was not a servant; some one worthy to receive her tradition, who in case of her death

9 THE DOCTOR—PORTRAIT OF MY BROTHER
an original lithograph
by
James M'Neil Whistler





death could look after Hugh, in all that phrase implied. She had cast about in her memory: her cousin Sophy must be fourteen; she gave days to reflecting on the girl's 'breed' (Harriet believed in breed); felt sure in the end that, accidents apart, she could make something of Sophy. The child turned out, as she became a woman, the very finest bit of mortal clay Harriet had ever had the handling of; so quiet, so intractable; long-suffering, and so savage. Any impression made on such a character lasts. So Harriet thought, and was glad because of Sophy Short. There was always perfect accord between the two, but never, never peace; they were destined to be noble friends one day. Such a pupil for such a mistress!

The two women became a sort of society. They spoke so little except between themselves: they treated Hugh with such equal kindness that they were almost to him as one. Whatever he required done either of them did, with the same readiness, the same silence, the same perfection. He gave up at length distinguishing their names, using them indifferently; they fell in with this arrangement. Hugh thought he had reached beautiful old age. He was very white. Wherever he went the fuss about him was extraordinary, even for so mild and ugly an old gentleman, and so renowned a preacher. The Juggernaut homages he had been accustomed to receive for years (let us say this was the cause) had led him to make a collection of the most sickening clichés, to which he made an occasional addition, about 'getting nearer the light,' and the like, phrases which sounded like tinned Longfellow. Poor old Hugh! But in pulpits he was different. Once above the heads of a thousand listeners, he found old fire to recite old sermons. Harriet seldom heard him; for one reason that he rarely preached in his own circuit, where a grateful Society gave him more assistance than he required. When she did, she was prominent in the chapel, nodded vigorous approval, with more than punctuality, at each full period, constituting herself a silent claqué.

'We shall not have Mr. Porter with us much longer,' started Sophy one quiet morning.

'What do you mean, Auntie?' asked Sophy angrily. 'How can you be so stupid? How do you know?'

'Mark my words, dear, you will see.'

'How do you know?'

'Mark my words.'

It seemed a foolish prediction, for Hugh had never been better

or

or livelier to Sophy's knowledge. She drew attention to this next day.

'That is just it,' answered Harriet. 'He is so active.'

There was not a trace in her manner of any feeling other than satisfaction in her prophecy. Sophy was far less contented. After tea, when all three were sitting together, Hugh rose from his chair rather suddenly, and Sophy, on the watch, burst out at him :

'Don't be so active, Uncle, you make me cross.'

Hugh was bewildered, but Harriet laughed :

'Don't mind her, my dear ; she is growing old.'

'Be more careful,' Sophy persisted sullenly ; 'where's your skull-cap?'

Her prophecy came true quickly enough to surprise Harriet herself. The very morning following Hugh was not allowed to get up ; congestion, pneumonia. The crowd at his burial was enormous. The grave-side encomiums were more sincere than grammatical.

'I have only to think now of following him,' said Harriet. A large subscription to support her widowhood was raised in the Society.

Hugh had lain dead a whole week before burial, for certain reasons. Harriet was glad of this. Day after day the weather seemed so bad for Hugh to begin his sojourn under clay. Many a troubling phrase came from Harriet while he still lay upstairs ; phrases the hearers excused, supposing them fruits of her excitement ; troubling not in their sense but in the expression : Hugh among angels the subject, right and pious enough as a notion ; but the thin old woman had a wild way of knowing what she spoke of. Hugh, bright and young and ransomed, in spiritual company. But the companions were not so feathered as sometimes seen, and their locality to Harriet was never vague or very distant. For her they were in the house or the little garden ; or against the corpse in prayer. When they were in the drawing-room, Harriet spoke of them, though not in direct statement as in a definite part of the room ; and talking currently and topically. Sophy and chance women lost patience at last, though they dared not show this. Their materialism was low and timid.

Against this (and the superficial may wonder), the corpse upstairs was still Hugh. When it had been buried it was still Hugh. Thrice, while he waited for burial, his grave costume was changed ; finally he went to rest in a long scarlet flannel robe, a passionate Christian symbol the excuse, that he might be warmer and look more comfortable in the earth, but chiefly that Harriet might *see him better*. Hints she dropped
of

of this intention were far too obscure for Sophy to penetrate. None remembered that Silenus lived again in his granddaughter: the old idiot who had intercourse with his dead through the medium of medicine-bottles full of brandy. But Silenus was crazed; fancy broke its bounds in his brain, so that he was obliged, with stiff fingers, to unearth the drams, to see if the dead had drunk, to drink with them.

Harriet was quite ready to take up her life again the very hour Hugh was put in the dust. Sophy allowed the household work to be resumed next day. It passed much as usual, only interrupted by an occasional snivel of Sophy. Harriet loved facts. Sophy waited patiently for the old woman to return to such expressions as she had used during the week her husband lay dead—to criticise them, and admonish her; but she waited in vain. Only during that week had any one heard Harriet speak of the dead and glorified as she had then spoken; both before and since, all her utterances on such subjects were strictly theological, and very scanty. Her care was always for the maintenance or improvement of material surroundings. Here Sophy seconded her with staunch intention. The two women kept up their house as though its inmates were twice as numerous, with as much enthusiasm as though they were on the threshold of life. Indeed, now Hugh was out of the way, there needed no mystery about the turning out and scouring which he loathed. They might wash the chimney-pots every day, and no one would scowl and whimper, and take to bed of *ennui*. Harriet had attained her very ideal of housewifery, only to find it hopelessly flawed by the fact that she could not do all herself. A failing frame fought her ravenous spirit of toil; for hours, literally straightened limbs forced her to idleness, while Sophy never sat down, never halted, the long day through: inventing epic tasks, lifetime tatting and microscopic patchworks, to employ the hours of lamplight. The only seeming solace Harriet had was that she might command idleness in Sophy; but how could she do that? Indeed, Sophy might refuse to obey her.

However, she took care to set aside, for the time when she was forced to sit down, certain employments to which repose was no barrier. Chief among these was the care of the 'silver,' the electro-plate she possessed. Her malice loved to see as much of the 'silver' used as possible, on all occasions: dishes, covers, forks, spoons, toast-rack, cruets—such wealth of bright metal as Harriet thought well nigh incredible. It was a joy of joys to her to be surrounded with her 'silver';

'silver'; lovingly to clean and polish, and then wrap each object in white tissue-paper, just as they had been received from the shop. 'What beautiful new spoons!' 'New spoons,' she would laugh, 'well, they are not very old; I have had them fifteen years.' With all the things in the house she valued it was the same. A great jealousy lest Sophy should interfere with them for any purpose. It would be time enough for her to touch the precious things when they were her own. There was never any question on the subject; it was so well understood that Sophy inherited all the possessions. And not exactly inherit either; the goods, and that vague wealth in the funds, which she would have at Harriet's death, would come as a life's wages deferred. For this she had toiled, brain and hands, to the full of her powers, for the Porters. For this she had kept herself fast, never suffering a thought of marriage, for example, to loiter in her mind. She knew, latterly, as she grew to know Harriet somewhat, that her legacy would be considerable. She arrived queerly at this knowledge. Harriet made no secret of the 'wage' understanding; she was finically just; and she set a higher value on *thorough* manual work than on most things.

It seemed near, too, now. Sophy waited from day to day to hear Harriet say, as she had said before: 'I shall not be with you long.' She had her angry answer ready, but it was never called for. So quickly as almost to be noticeable from one week to another, Harriet spent less and less of her day on her feet. Less and less too was she able to use her fingers. Her life drifted more every day towards one chair, one which had been her affectation somewhat, ever since Hugh was taken away. Sophy thought she had always a strange look when sitting in it. It was true. Harriet loved, since she must be idle, to be idle in that chair. From it—for it was never moved—the light of the little sitting-room favoured her seeing what passed before her mind when she was reflective. She would pause sometimes in her work of cleaning the 'silver,' and sit with tea-pot and chamois leather quiet in her hands, and a fixed look in her eyes. She still persisted in cleaning the 'silver'; but as she was able to take care of less, less was used.

When Harriet was in this almost cataleptic condition—and at last it was characteristic—all offers of ministration, and all inquiries from Sophy, were met with thanks and: 'I am just thinking.' Sophy would wait to see if anything would be added. But only a twinkling smile answered her curiosity, or a vague sentence cut short in the middle,
changed

changed presently to some matter of fact, to the valuables she would leave at her death: 'You had better have all the silver replated, my dear; then it will last for years. And you must have the drawing-room clock cleaned. Don't be afraid to spend money having everything done up. Then it will be as though you were starting for yourself. I shall come back, perhaps, and see what you are doing; but *you won't see me.*' Then such a funny little laugh.

'Don't be so stupid, Auntie. It's nothing to laugh at.'

Auntie thought she had the laugh, all the same. 'Silver' and clocks and money in the funds she left Sophy; *the rest* she took with her, into the grave and out on the other side. Sophy would not see her; Sophy would not see anything but house-linen and spoons. Hugh had never seen anything; question if he saw much now; she saw him.

'Now, Sophy, I want you to do something for me,' said Harriet. 'Address an envelope to the manager of the bank.' Sophy did this. Harriet slipped into the envelope a folded letter. 'I want you to take this to the bank. Give it to one of the clerks and wait for an answer.'

'You will be all right until I come back?' said Sophy; mere courtesy, for Harriet wanted little most hours of the twenty-four. She went out into the scullery where a charwoman was *soiling* the flags, in the language of her irony, at two shillings a day, and sent her off. A cynical precaution; Harriet was practically helpless, and the woman might ransack the house. Then she went upstairs and dressed herself out in all the best she had. She had never felt so 'silly' in her life; one moment excessively serious, as though she were going to take possession of the bank as a symbol of untold fortune; the next, as utterly conscious before the glass, posing her bonnet upon her flattened hair. She had never before worn *all* her best on a weekday. She went off to the bank without saying good-bye; so much did she realise the perfection of her appearance. The letter she carried contained only a blank sheet of paper.

At the slam of the street door, Harriet was alone in the house; alone with the accumulations of her life. She looked slowly round the little sitting-room, resting on each object with the same thought. The square table would be Sophy's, the round one too; the china in the corner cupboard, each piece of china singly. The cupboard itself was a possession. The canary in its cage before the window would be Sophy's, the maidenhair ferns and the variegated houseleek below it. All would be Sophy's, every visible object. Through the wall there,
in

in the drawing-room, which she knew so well that the partition wall scarcely existed, the piano (which would have to be tuned), the inlaid sideboard, and the candlesticks and stuffed birds upon it, would be Sophy's. Hugh's presentation Bible would be hers; the rugs, the pictures on the walls, the curtains, the coal-box, the gilt-legged chair, all must be left behind. Sophy would have all. Down below her feet, through the floor, all the crockery on the dresser would be Sophy's. All the brass on the high black mantelshelf, the warming-pan hanging by the dresser, the commoner knives, the old clock, all the pots and crocks would be Sophy's. A mayor's dinner might be cooked in that kitchen. Upstairs, the great bedsteads, the presses full, crammed with linen, would be Sophy's. Whatever happened, Sophy would never want linen. She herself would want one nightdress between her bones and her coffin: they would hide her neck with a napkin, and cover her feet with another; all in the common way. She left no directions on this point. The costume of the dead calls for loving invention. Sophy would not rise to this; she did not know.

All the silver in the cupboard beside her would be Sophy's, all wrapped in tissue-paper and safe inside baize-lined boxes. All would be Sophy's; the hassock under her feet, the chair in which she sat, the clothes she wore, the shawl about her head, her brooch, her mittens, her slippers. All tangible things in the house were nearly Sophy's own now; very nearly. What was all the house, with walls so thin and frail, as earthly substance is, that her poor eyesight was not stopped by them, pierced them like clear water or clear air? The lines of the room threatened to fade altogether at the bold thought. The lines of the window-frame wavered and curved; the horizontal arched, the perpendicular lines curved outwards as they dropped. It was not much she was leaving; perhaps she was not leaving much behind. Something, too, she took away. She had told Sophy where her will was, that there was money invested. There were other secrets she had not told her, which Sophy now would never know. Her limbs stiffened, or were senseless. She had no pain. Only the captivation of her eyes by the shapeless light through the window troubled her. It called to her, drew her eyes with magnetic power. Something rose in her throat; her eyes darkened; and Harriet was gone.

JOHN GRAY.

ET S'IL REVENAIT

ET s'il revenait un jour

Que faut-il lui dire ?

— Dites lui qu'on l'attendit

Jusqu'à s'en mourir . . .

Et s'il demande où vous êtes

Que faut-il répondre ?

— Donnez-lui mon anneau d'or

Sans rien lui répondre . . .

Et s'il m'interroge encore

Sans me reconnaître ?

— Parlez-lui comme une sœur

Il souffre peut être . . .

Et s'il veut savoir pourquoi

La salle est déserte ?

— Montrez-lui la lampe éteinte

Et la porte ouverte . . .

Et s'il m'interroge alors

Sur la dernière heure ?

— Dites-lui que j'ai souri

De peur qu'il ne pleure.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

ON THE SHALLOWS



AT-TA-TA, Fa-la-la! Fa-la-fa-la-La! *Now* you remember my tune, don't you, Fantasio?'

'Yes, Lady, I remember it now,' said the boy, hesitatingly.

'Listen, my Lord. You were saying that no woman had ever composed a good tune, though 'tis every woman's business to play. I could touch it lightly on the string myself were it not that I've hurt my finger with a plaguy tapestry needle. But I am minded to show you a piece of my teaching also. Fantasio can't play as Peter does, but Peter was a Court minstrel. Why don't you play, boy?'

For answer came a queer sound from the page's throat, and an instant tinkle of the chords. Trembling was the little hand that held the neck of the cithara, and the fingers of the other wavered as they pulled at the tight lines, now firmly, now feebly. And as the Fa-la-fa-la-la hovered over the still water, a long trumpet-call floated through the air from the castle tower far away across the sand-flats, with a discordance sufficiently potent to hurt the Lady Joana's melody.

At her order then he stopped for an interval, and the slow oars dipped sluggishly. Once more the far trees on the edge of the campaign seemed to move; once more they passed, one in front of another; once more the low sound of spent waves turning on the beach was lost in the gurgle at the boat's prow; once more the two squires chattered, in tones becomingly subdued, to the two waiting-maids as the keel glided over the shallows.

Far out to sea lay the same slumbrous level, a wonderful shining floor of tinted silver it seemed as the light flashes of purple came at times over its dull gleam of gradual blue. There were tawny regions for miles round the solitary boat, tawny regions of shoal and quicksand, which melted away into the warm greyish-green of the deeps. And over all—shallows and deeps—lay the same great peace, until the eye wandered past one ship lying becalmed and faint, like a summer ghost of some butterfly dead too soon; past the warm white spot of its distant sails . . . to the horizon, whose sharp edge would seem to show that some breeze was passing along it to the unseen countries of the newly-found West. A dot was on that line, and the dot moved. Mayhap it held

♩ SYMPHONY IN WHITE No. III
by
James M'Neil Whistler



held a band of fiery spirits, who were off on the quest for Eldorado, mayhap only a cautious crew of merchantmen,—still it moved. But here all life had become smoothed into a long pause: the white ship lay motionless, the clarion's call died away, the water never stirred, but only slept and shone, the sigh of waves on the sandy shore was as the scarce-heard breathing of a girl's repose. . . .

'They have done with their noise,' said Lady Joana. 'So play my tune again, Fantasio, and do it better.'

'Yes, Lady,' mumbled the boy.

He had control of himself now, and the dancing notes poured merrily forth as his nimble fingers shifted over the instrument. Light and gay it was, this melody of a woman's composing, and it set one's blood on tip-toe with its frolicsome thrill. The women tapped their shoes instinctively as a current of dance tingled in heel and sole; the men tattooed with their fingers on the plank. Lady Joana laughed, they all laughed, and the sound of their laughter blending with the sigh of the shore seemed to take a dreamy pleasantness that was the expression of a universal harmony, lying lightly on the shallows.

'You do not say what you think of it, my Lord.'

'Faith, I hardly know what to say,' replied the young noble, beating about in the thickets of his mind for a courtly compliment, for he felt the responsibility of keeping up the Court's reputation. Alas! it was a pseudo-glory, the halo of a gay place surrounding the dullest and most cloddish of its frequenters; but then these country people expected wit from him, so he must make a great effort, for he did not wish to lose lustre in the lady's eyes.

'Faith, . . . it is the brightness of your mind which dazzles my discernment. It is as though all the groves of Arcadia were open to be seen, and the sheep cast off their nature and danced with their fair mistress. It's such a . . . such a tune as Phoebus might have invented to charm the frowns of the Muses into smiles . . . it is a music that might be the very food of love. . . .'

Lady Joana drank it in with pleasure. Her looks said 'More!' but Lord Bertram could not gratify her; he only continued that it was very pretty, it was vastly pretty, that it could not but please hugely every one who had the good fortune to hear it.

As he said this his eye fell on the page, who still wrought at the melody with bent head, hiding as well as he could the woebegone look which he felt to be evident on his face. Suddenly Lady Joana spoke,

spoke, and the sound of her voice caused the boy to wince slightly, as if he had memories of a clout on the ear. But it was the faintest shade of a shrink, and for this time groundless. His mistress was ordering him to play for her singing, with intent to charm Lord Bertram further.

Tinkle-tankle, thrum-thrum—and to the accompaniment of the sweet notes she carolled forth a ditty of birds and groves, and flowers and loves, with a little chorus of Down, down, derry-down. As Lord Bertram, with some pains, accomplished another string of compliments, again the far clarion-call came across the warm air and water.

'There are fresh guests,' said Lady Joana then, with a pleased look in her eye, 'and we will be returning to welcome them. So take the rudder, Hugh.'

While Hugh did his mistress's bidding, the boy Fantasio grew absent of mind and touched the strings to a little simple tune, very lightly and low. Lord Bertram listened, nevertheless, and interrupted him with praise, saying that it was the best of all he had yet played. But Fantasio, instead of going on, stopped in confusion, and looked uneasy. 'Boy,' said Lady Joana, all at once, 'play my dance to the men's oars as they row!'

And instantly Fantasio obeyed, with the same suggestion of a shrink. Dip, dip, dip went the blades, and the tune kept time with them.

'Twas his own tune, that last,' whispered the farthest rower to his neighbour alongside him in the broad boat where two men sat a seat. 'My Lady is none too pleased, I warrant.'

'Nay, I like this one also,' said the other, who had not long been in this service, 'a merry tune, that makes me fit to dance.'

'It is the tune to which poor Jack's father was beaten out of his life,' whispered the first man. 'He offended my Lady somehow, and was basted to satisfy her, there in the castle-yard. And, being weakly just then, it finished him next day. Made him spit out his heart in blood. 'Twas then that Jack came into my Lady's service, and got his new name. Therefore he remembers the tune.'

So to the playing of Fantasio the boat glided shorewards, dragging heavily over the shallows. The party landed and filed over the plain to the castle, and passed through the great gate.

And when Fantasio had followed his mistress through her greetings, and had held her train through court and hall and passage, till they were alone—he and she,—she turned upon him and dealt his head a heavy blow with her scented fist—another, and another, to which he submitted

submitted silently. 'Little, low-bred fellow,' she said, as she viciously pinched his ear, 'this is for being too forward.'

However, when at last she was gone, he rubbed his face quietly and dried his eyes. Then he took up the cithara, and, peering out to see that he was quite alone, played softly to himself the thoughts which came to him in such sorrowful moments—wild little airs and curious fancies, which were his refuge, his aids to patient silence.

So for a time he forgot that he was here fast bound on the shallows a servant to the caprices of a vain fine lady.

W. DELAPLAINE SCULL.

SONG

O HAVE you blessed, behind the stars,
The blue sheen in the skies,
When June the roses round her calls?—
Then do you know the light that falls
From her beloved eyes.

And have you felt the sense of peace
That morning meadows give?—
Then do you know the spirit of grace,
The angel abiding in her face,
Who makes it good to live.

She shines before me, hope and dream,
So fair, so still, so wise,
That, winning her, I seem to win
Out of the drive and dust and din
A nook of Paradise.

W. E. HENLEY (1877).

THE DEATH OF TINTAGILES

BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK Translated by ALFRED SUTRO
CHARACTERS

TINTAGILES,

YGRAINE, . . . } Sisters of TINTAGILES.
BELLANGÈRE, . . . }

AGLOVALE,

THREE SERVANTS of the QUEEN.

ACT I SCENE—*On the top of a hill overlooking the castle.*

[*Enter YGRAINE, holding TINTAGILES by the hand.*]

YGRAINE. Your first night will be sad, Tintagiles. The roar of the sea is already about us; and the trees are moaning. It is late. The moon is sinking behind the poplars that stifle the palace. . . . We are alone, perhaps; but here, one has ever to be on one's guard. They seem to watch lest the smallest happiness come near. I said to myself one day, right down in the depths of my soul—and God himself could scarcely hear;—I said to myself one day that I was feeling almost happy. . . . There needed nothing more, and very soon after, our old father died, and our two brothers disappeared, and not a living creature can tell us where they are. I am here all alone, with my poor sister and you, my little Tintagiles; and I have no confidence in the future. . . . Come to me; let me take you on my knees. First kiss me; and put your little arms—there—right round my neck . . . perhaps they will not be able to unfasten them. . . . Do you remember the time when it was I who carried you in the evening, when the hour had come; and how frightened you were at the shadows of my lamp in the corridors, those long corridors with not a single window? I felt my soul tremble on my lips when I saw you again, suddenly, this morning. . . . I thought you were so far away and so well cared for. . . . Who made you come here?

TINTAGILES. I do not know, little sister.

YGRAINE. Do you remember what they said?

TINTAGILES. They said I must go away.

YGRAINE. But why had you to go away?

TINTAGILES. Because the Queen wished it.

YGRAINE. Did they not say why she wished it?—I am sure they must have said many things.

TINTAGILES. Little sister, I did not hear.

YGRAINE. When they spoke among themselves, what was it they said?

TINTAGILES. Little sister, they dropped their voices when they spoke.

YGRAINE. All the time?

TINTAGILES. All the time, sister Ygraine; except when they looked at me.

YGRAINE. Did they say nothing about the Queen?

TINTAGILES. They said, sister Ygraine, that no one ever saw her.

YGRAINE. And the people who were with you on the ship, did they say nothing?

TINTAGILES. They gave all their time to the wind and the sails, sister Ygraine.

YGRAINE. Ah! . . . That does not surprise me, my child. . . .

TINTAGILES. They left me all alone, little sister.

YGRAINE. Listen to me, Tintagiles; I will tell you what I know. . . .

TINTAGILES. What do you know, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE. Very little, my child. . . . My sister and I have gone on living here ever since we were born, not daring to understand the things that happened. . . . I have lived a long time in this island, and I might as well have been blind; yet it all seemed natural to me. . . . A bird that flew, a leaf that trembled, a rose that opened . . . these were events to me. Such silence has always reigned here that a ripe fruit falling in the park would draw faces to the window. . . . And no one seemed to have any suspicion . . . but one night I learned that there must be something besides. . . . I wished to escape and I could not. . . . Have you understood what I am telling you?

TINTAGILES. Yes, yes, little sister; I can understand anything. . . .

YGRAINE. Then let us not talk any more about these things . . . one does not know. . . . Do you see, behind the dead trees which poison the horizon, do you see the castle, there, right down in the valley?

TINTAGILES. I see something very black—is that the castle, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE. Yes, it is very black. . . . It lies far down amid a mass of gloomy shadows. . . . It is there we have to live. . . . They might have built it on the top of the great mountains which surround it. . . . The mountains are blue in the day-time. . . . One could have breathed. One could have looked down on the sea and on the plains beyond the cliffs. . . . But they preferred to build it deep down in the valley; too low even for the air to come. . . .

It is falling in ruins, and no one troubles. . . . The walls are crumbling: it might be fading away in the gloom. . . . There is only one tower which time does not touch. . . . It is enormous: and its shadow is always on the house.

TINTAGILES. They are lighting something, sister Ygraine. . . . See, see, the great red windows! . . .

YGRAINE. They are the windows of the tower, Tintagiles; they are the only ones in which you will ever see light; it is there that the Queen has her throne.

TINTAGILES. Shall I not see the Queen?

YGRAINE. No one can see her.

TINTAGILES. Why can no one see her?

YGRAINE. Come closer, Tintagiles. . . . Not even a bird or a blade of grass must hear us.

TINTAGILES. There is no grass, little sister . . . [*a moment's silence*]. What does the Queen do?

YGRAINE. That no one knows, my child. She is never seen. . . . She lives there, all alone in the tower; and those who wait on her do not go out by daylight. . . . She is very old; she is the mother of our mother, and she wishes to reign alone. . . . She is suspicious and jealous, and they say she is mad. . . . She is afraid lest some one should raise himself to her place; and it is probably because of this fear of hers that you have been brought here. . . . Her orders are carried out: but no one knows how. . . . She never leaves the tower, and all the gates are closed night and day. . . . I have never seen her, but it seems others have, long ago, when she was young. . . .

TINTAGILES. Is she very ugly, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE. They say she is not beautiful, and that her form is strange. . . . But those who have seen her dare not speak of her. . . . And who knows whether they have seen her? . . . She has a power which we do not understand, and we live here with a terrible weight on our soul. . . . You must not be unduly frightened, or have bad dreams; we will watch over you, little Tintagiles, and no harm can come to you; but do not stray far from me, or your sister Bellangère, or our old master Aglovale.

TINTAGILES. Aglovale, too, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE. Aglovale too . . . he loves us . . .

TINTAGILES. He is so old, little sister!

YGRAINE. He is old, but very wise. . . . He is the only friend we have

left; and he knows many things. . . . It is strange; she made you come here, and no one was told of it. . . . I do not know what is in my heart. . . . I was sorrowful and glad to know that you were far away, beyond the sea. . . . And now . . . I was taken by surprise.

. . . I went out this morning to see whether the sun was rising over the mountains; and I saw you on the threshold. . . . I knew you at once.

TINTAGILES. No, no, little sister; it was I who laughed first. . . .

YGRAINE. I could not laugh . . . just then. . . . You will understand. . . .

It is time, Tintagiles, and the wind is becoming black on the sea. . . .

Kiss me, before getting up; kiss me, harder, again, again. . . . You do not know how one loves. . . . Give me your little hand. . . . I will keep it in mine, and we will go back to the old sick castle.

[*They go out.*]

ACT II SCENE—*A room in the castle, in which AGLOVALE and YGRAINE are seated.*

[*Enter BELLANGÈRE.*]

BELLANGÈRE. Where is Tintagiles?

YGRAINE. He is here; do not speak too loud. He is asleep in the other room. He was a little pale, he did not seem well. The journey had tired him—he was a long time on the sea. Or perhaps it is the atmosphere of the castle which has alarmed his little soul. He was crying, and did not know why he cried. I nursed him on my knees; come look at him. . . . He is asleep in our bed. . . . He lies there, with one hand on his brow, looking very serious, like a little sorrowful king. . . .

BELLANGÈRE [*suddenly bursting into tears*]. Sister! Sister! . . . my poor sister! . . .

YGRAINE. Why are you crying?

BELLANGÈRE. I dare not tell what I know . . . and I am not sure that I know anything . . . but yet I have heard—that which one could not hear . . .

YGRAINE. What have you heard?

BELLANGÈRE. I was passing close to the corridors of the tower . . .

YGRAINE. Ah! . . .

• PSYCHE IN THE HOUSE
by
Charles Ricketts



BELLANGÈRE. One of the doors was ajar. I pushed it very gently . . . I went in . . .

YGRAINE. Where?

BELLANGÈRE. I had never seen. . . . There were other corridors lighted with lamps; and then low galleries, which seemed to have no end. . . . I knew it was forbidden to go farther. . . . I was afraid and was about to go back, but there was a sound of voices . . . though one could scarcely hear . . .

YGRAINE. It must have been the servants of the Queen; they live at the foot of the tower . . .

BELLANGÈRE. I do not know quite what it was. . . . There must have been more than one door between; and the voices came to me like the voice of some one who is being strangled. . . . I went as near as I could. . . . I am not sure of anything: but I believe they were speaking of a child who had arrived to-day, and of a crown of gold. . . . They seemed to be laughing . . .

YGRAINE. They were laughing?

BELLANGÈRE. Yes, I think they were laughing . . . unless it was that they were crying, or that it was something that I did not understand; for one heard badly, and their voices were low. . . . There seemed to be a great many of them moving about in the vault. . . . They were speaking of the child that the Queen wished to see. . . . They will probably come here this evening . . .

YGRAINE. What? . . . this evening? . . .

BELLANGÈRE. Yes . . . yes. . . . I think so . . . yes . . .

YGRAINE. Did they not mention any name?

BELLANGÈRE. They spoke of a child—a little, little child . . .

YGRAINE. There is no other child here . . .

BELLANGÈRE. Just then they raised their voices a little, for one of them had doubted whether the day was come . . .

YGRAINE. I know what that means, and it will not be the first time that they have left the tower. . . . I knew but too well why she made him come . . . but I could not think that she would show such haste as this! . . . We shall see . . . there are three of us, and we have time . . .

BELLANGÈRE. What do you mean to do?

YGRAINE. I do not know as yet what I shall do, but I shall surprise her . . . do you know what that means, you who can only tremble? . . . I will tell you . . .

BELLANGÈRE. What ?

YGRAINE. She shall not take him without a struggle . . .

BELLANGÈRE. We are alone, sister Ygraine . . .

YGRAINE. Ah ! it is true we are alone ! . . . There is only one thing to be done, and it never fails us ! . . . Let us wait on our knees as we did before . . . Perhaps she will have pity ! . . . She allows herself to be moved by tears . . . We must grant her everything she asks ; she will smile perhaps ; and it is her habit to spare all those who kneel . . . All these years she has been there in her enormous tower, devouring those we love, and not a single one has dared strike her in the face . . . She lies on our soul like the stone of a tomb, and no one dares stretch out his arm . . . In the times when there were men here, they too were afraid, and fell upon their faces . . . To-day it is the woman's turn . . . we shall see . . . It is time that some one should dare to rise . . . No one knows on what her power rests, and I will no longer live in the shadow of her tower . . . Go away, if you two can only tremble like this—go away both of you, and leave me still more alone . . . I will wait for her . . .

BELLANGÈRE. Sister, I do not know what has to be done, but I will wait with you . . .

AGLOVALE. I too will wait, my daughter . . . My soul has long been ill at ease . . . You will try . . . we have tried more than once . . .

YGRAINE. You have tried . . . you also ?

AGLOVALE. They have all tried . . . But at the last moment their strength has failed them . . . You too, you shall see . . . If she were to command me to go up to her this very evening, I would put my two hands together and say nothing ; and my weary feet would climb the staircase, without lingering and without hastening, though I know full well that none come down again with unclosed eyes . . . There is no courage left in me against her . . . our hands are helpless, and can touch no one . . . Other hands than these are wanted, and all is useless . . . But you are hopeful, and I will assist you . . . Close the doors, my child . . . Awaken Tintagiles ; bare your little arms and enfold him within them, and take him on your knees . . . we have no other defence . . .

ACT III SCENE—*The same room.*

[YGRAINE and AGLOVALE.]

YGRAINE. I have been to look at the doors. There are three of them. We will watch the large one. . . . The two others are low and heavy. They are never opened. The keys were lost long ago, and the iron bars are sunk into the walls. Help me close this door; it is heavier than the gate of a city. . . . It is very massive; the lightning itself could not pierce through it. . . . Are you prepared for all that may happen?

AGLOVALE [*seating himself on the threshold*]. I will go seat myself on the steps; my sword upon my knees. . . . I do not think this is the first time that I have waited and watched here, my child; and there are moments when one does not understand all that one remembers. . . . I have done all this before, I do not know when . . . but I have never dared draw my sword. . . . Now, it lies there before me, though my arms no longer have strength; but I intend to try. . . . It is perhaps time that men should defend themselves, even though they do not understand. . . .

[BELLANGÈRE, carrying TINTAGILES in her arms, comes out of the adjoining room.]

BELLANGÈRE. He was awake. . . .

YGRAINE. He is pale . . . what ails him?

BELLANGÈRE. I do not know . . . he was very silent. . . . He was crying. . . .

YGRAINE. Tintagiles. . . .

BELLANGÈRE. He is looking away from you.

YGRAINE. He does not seem to know me. . . . Tintagiles, where are you?—It is your sister who speaks to you. . . . What are you looking at so fixedly?—Turn round . . . come, I will play with you. . . .

TINTAGILES. No. . . . No. . . .

YGRAINE. Do you not care to play?

TINTAGILES. I cannot stand, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE. You cannot stand? . . . Come, come, what is the matter with you?—Are you suffering any pain? . . .

TINTAGILES. Yes. . . .

YGRAINE. Where do you suffer pain?—Tell me, Tintagiles, and I will cure you. . . .

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TINTAGILES. I cannot tell, sister Ygraine . . . everywhere. . . .

YGRAINE. Come to me, Tintagiles. . . . You know that my arms are softer, and I will put them around you, and you will feel better at once. . . . Give him to me, Bellangère. . . . He shall sit on my knees, and the pain will go. . . . There, you see? . . . Your big sisters are here. . . . They are close to you . . . we will defend you, and no evil can come near. . . .

TINTAGILES. It has come, sister Ygraine. . . . Why is there no light, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE. There is a light, my child. . . . Do you not see the lamp which hangs from the rafters?

TINTAGILES. Yes, yes. . . . It is not large. . . . Are there no others?

YGRAINE. Why should there be others? We can see what we have to see. . . .

TINTAGILES. Ah! . . .

YGRAINE. Oh! your eyes are deep. . . .

TINTAGILES. So are yours, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE. I did not notice it this morning. . . . I have just seen in your eyes. . . . We do not quite know what the soul thinks it sees. . . .

TINTAGILES. I have not seen the soul, sister Ygraine. . . . But why is Aglovale on the threshold?

YGRAINE. He is resting a little. . . . He wanted to kiss you before going to bed . . . he was waiting for you to wake. . . .

TINTAGILES. What has he on his knees?

YGRAINE. On his knees? I see nothing on his knees. . . .

TINTAGILES. Yes, yes, there is something. . . .

AGLOVALE. It is nothing, my child. . . . I was looking at my old sword; and I scarcely recognise it. . . . It has served me many years, but for a long time past I have lost confidence in it, and I think it is going to break. . . . Here, just by the hilt, there is a little stain. . . . I had noticed that the steel was growing paler, and I asked myself. . . . I do not remember what I asked myself. . . . My soul is very heavy to-day. . . . What is one to do? . . . Men must needs live and await the unforeseen. . . . And after that they must still act as if they hoped. . . . There are sad evenings when our useless lives taste bitter in our mouths, and we would like to close our eyes. . . . It is late, and I am tired. . . .

TINTAGILES. He has wounds, sister Ygraine.

YGRAINE. Where?

TINTAGILES. On his forehead and on his hands. . . .

AGLOVALE. Those are very old wounds, from which I suffer no longer, my child. . . . The light must be falling on them this evening. . . .

You had not noticed them before?

TINTAGILES. He looks sad, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE. No, no, he is not sad, but very weary. . . .

TINTAGILES. You too, you are sad, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE. Why no, why no; look at me, I am smiling. . . .

TINTAGILES. And my other sister too. . . .

YGRAINE. Oh no, she too is smiling.

TINTAGILES. No, that is not a smile . . . I know. . . .

YGRAINE. Come, kiss me, and think of something else. . . . [*She kisses him.*]

TINTAGILES. Of what shall I think, sister Ygraine?—Why do you hurt me when you kiss me?

YGRAINE. Did I hurt you?

TINTAGILES. Yes. . . . I do not know why I hear your heart beat, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE. Do you hear it beat?

TINTAGILES. Oh! Oh! it beats as though it wanted to . . .

YGRAINE. What?

TINTAGILES. I do not know, sister Ygraine.

YGRAINE. It is wrong to be frightened without reason, and to speak in riddles. . . . Oh! your eyes are full of tears. . . . Why are you unhappy? I hear your heart beating, now . . . people always hear them when they hold one another so close. It is then that the heart speaks and says things that the tongue does not know. . . .

TINTAGILES. I heard nothing before. . . .

YGRAINE. That was because. . . . Oh! but your heart! . . . What is the matter? . . . It is bursting! . . .

TINTAGILES [*Crying*]. Sister Ygraine! sister Ygraine!

YGRAINE. What is it?

TINTAGILES. I have heard. . . . They . . . they are coming!

YGRAINE. Who? Who are coming? . . . What has happened? . . .

TINTAGILES. The door! the door! They were there! . . . [*He falls backwards on to Ygraine's knees*].

YGRAINE. What is it? . . . He has . . . he has fainted. . . .

BELLANGÈRE. Take care . . . take care . . . He will fall . . .

AGLOVALE [*rising brusquely, his sword in his hand*]. I too can hear . . . there are steps in the corridor.

YGRAINE. Oh! . . .

[*A moment's silence—they all listen.*]

AGLOVALE. Yes, I hear. . . . There is a crowd of them. . . .

YGRAINE. A crowd . . . a crowd . . . how?

AGLOVALE. I do not know . . . one hears and one does not hear. . . .

They do not move like other creatures, but they come. . . . They are touching the door. . . .

YGRAINE [*clasping TINTAGILES in her arms*]. Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . .

BELLANGÈRE [*embracing him*]. Let me, too! let me! . . . Tintagiles!

AGLOVALE. They are shaking the door . . . listen . . . do not breathe. . . . They are whispering. . . .

[*A key is heard turning harshly in the lock.*]

YGRAINE. They have the key! . . .

AGLOVALE. Yes . . . yes. . . . I was sure of it. . . . Wait . . . [*He plants himself, with sword outstretched, on the last step. To the two sisters*]. Come! come both! . . .

[*For a moment there is silence. The door opens slowly. AGLOVALE thrusts his sword wildly through the opening, driving the point between the beams. The sword breaks with a loud report under the silent pressure of the timber, and the pieces of steel roll down the steps with a resounding clang. YGRAINE leaps up, carrying in her arms TINTAGILES, who has fainted; and she, BELLANGÈRE, and AGLOVALE, putting forth all their strength, try, but in vain, to close the door, which slowly opens wider and wider, although no one can be seen or heard. Only, a cold and calm light penetrates into the room. At this moment TINTAGILES, suddenly stretching out his limbs, regains consciousness, sends forth a long cry of deliverance, and embraces his sister—and at this very instant the door, which resists no longer, falls to brusquely under their pressure, which they have not had time to relinquish.*]

YGRAINE. Tintagiles! [*They look at each other with astonishment.*]

AGLOVALE [*waiting at the door*]. I hear nothing now. . . .

YGRAINE [*wild with joy*]. Tintagiles! Tintagiles! Look! Look! . . .

He is saved! . . . Look at his eyes . . . you can see the blue. . . . He is going to speak. . . . They saw we were watching. . . . They did not dare. . . . Kiss us! . . . Kiss us, I say! . . . Kiss us! . . . All! all! . . . Down to the depths of our souls! . . . [*All four, their eyes full of tears, fall into each other's arms.*]

ACT IV SCENE—*A corridor in front of the room in which the last Act took place.*

[*Three SERVANTS of the Queen enter. They are all veiled, and their long black robes flow down to the ground.*]

FIRST SERVANT [*listening at the door*]. They are not watching. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. We need not have waited. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. She prefers that it should be done in silence. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. I knew that they must fall asleep. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Quick! . . . open the door. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. It is time. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. Wait there . . . I will enter alone. There is no need for three of us. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. You are right: he is very small. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. You must be careful with the elder sister. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Remember the Queen does not want them to know. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. Have no fear; people seldom hear my coming. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Go in then; it is time.

[*The FIRST SERVANT opens the door cautiously and goes into the room.*]

It is close on midnight. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. Ah! . . .

[*A moment's silence. The FIRST SERVANT comes out of the room.*]

SECOND SERVANT. Where is he?

FIRST SERVANT. He is asleep between his sisters. His arms are around their necks; and their arms enfold him. . . . I cannot do it alone. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. I will help you. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. Yes; do you go together. . . . I will keep watch here. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. Be careful; they seem to know. . . . They were all three struggling with a bad dream. . . .

[*The two SERVANTS go into the room.*]

THIRD SERVANT. People always know; but they do not understand. . .

[*A moment's silence. The FIRST and SECOND SERVANTS come out of the room again.*]

THIRD SERVANT. Well?

SECOND SERVANT. You must come too . . . we cannot separate them. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. No sooner do we unclasp their arms than they fall back around the child. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. And the child nestles closer and closer to them. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. He is lying with his forehead on the elder sister's heart. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. And his head rises and falls on her bosom. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. We shall not be able to open his hands. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. They are plunged deep down into his sisters' hair. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. He holds one golden curl between his little teeth. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. We shall have to cut the elder sister's hair.

FIRST SERVANT. And the other sister's too, you shall see. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Have you your scissors?

THIRD SERVANT. Yes. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. Come quickly; they have begun to move. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Their hearts and their eyelids are throbbing together. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. Yes; I caught a glimpse of the elder girl's blue eyes. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. She looked at us but did not see us. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. If one touches one of them, the other two tremble. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. They are trying hard, but they cannot stir. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. The elder sister wishes to scream, but she cannot. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. Come quickly; they seem to know. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. Where is the old man?

FIRST SERVANT. He is asleep—away from the others. . . .

§• ÆDIPUS
after a pen drawing
by
Charles Ricketts



SECOND SERVANT. He sleeps, his forehead resting on the hilt of his sword. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. He knows of nothing ; and he has no dreams. . . .

THIRD SERVANT. Come, come, we must hasten. . . .

FIRST SERVANT. You will find it difficult to separate their limbs. . . .

SECOND SERVANT. They are clutching at each other as though they were drowning.

THIRD SERVANT. Come, come. . . .

[They go in. The silence is broken only by sighs and low murmurs of suffering, held in thrall by sleep. Then the three SERVANTS emerge very hurriedly from the gloomy room. One of them carries TINTAGILES, who is fast asleep, in her arms. From his little hands, twitching in sleep, and his mouth, drawn in agony, a glittering stream of golden tresses, ravished from the heads of his sisters, flows down to the ground. The SERVANTS hurry on. There is perfect silence ; but no sooner have they reached the end of the corridor than TINTAGILES awakes, and sends forth a cry of supreme distress.]

TINTAGILES *[from the end of the corridor]*. Aah ! . . .

[There is again silence. Then, from the adjoining room the two sisters are heard moving about restlessly.]

YGRAINE *[in the room]*. Tintagiles ! . . . where is he ?

BELLANGÈRE. He is not here. . . .

YGRAINE *[with growing anguish]*. Tintagiles ! . . . a lamp, a lamp ! . . . Light it ! . . .

BELLANGÈRE. Yes . . . Yes. . . .

[Ygraine is seen coming out of the room with the lighted lamp in her hand.]

YGRAINE. The door is wide open !

The voice of TINTAGILES [almost inaudible in the distance]. Sister Ygraine !

YGRAINE. He calls ! . . . He calls ! . . . Tintagiles ! Tintagiles ! . . .

[She rushes into the corridor. BELLANGÈRE tries to follow, but falls fainting on the threshold.]

ACT V SCENE—*Before a great iron door in a gloomy vault.*

[Enter YGRAINE, *haggard and dishevelled, with a lamp in her hand.*]

YGRAINE [*turning wildly to and fro*]. They have not followed me! . . . Bellangère! . . . Bellangère! . . . Aglovale! . . . Where are they?—They said they loved him and they leave me alone! . . . Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . . Oh! I remember . . . I have climbed steps without number, between great pitiless walls, and my heart bids me live no longer . . . These vaults seem to move . . . [*She supports herself against the pillars*]. I am falling . . . Oh! Oh! my poor life! I can feel it . . . It is trembling on my lips—it wants to depart . . . I do not know what I have done . . . I have seen nothing, I have heard nothing . . . Oh, this silence! . . . All along the steps and all along the walls I found these golden curls; and I followed them. I picked them up . . . Oh! oh! they are very pretty! . . . Little childie . . . little childie . . . what was I saying? I remember . . . I do not believe in it . . . When one sleeps . . . All that has no importance and is not possible . . . Of what am I thinking? . . . I do not know . . . One awakes, and then . . . After all—come, after all—I must think this out . . . Some say one thing, some say the other; but the way of the soul is quite different. When the chain is taken off, there is much more than one knows. . . . I came here with my little lamp. . . . It did not go out, in spite of the wind on the staircase . . . And then, what is one to think? There are so many things which are so vague . . . There must be people who know them; but why do they not speak? [*She looks around her.*] I have never seen all this before . . . It is difficult to get so far—and it is all forbidden . . . How cold it is . . . And so dark that one is afraid to breathe . . . They say there is poison in these gloomy shadows . . . That door looks very terrible . . . [*She goes up to the door and touches it.*] Oh! how cold it is . . . It is of iron . . . solid iron—and there is no lock . . . How can they open it? I see no hinges . . . I suppose it is sunk into the wall . . . This is as far as one can go . . . There are no more steps. [*Suddenly sending forth a terrible shriek.*] Ah! . . . more golden hair between the panels! . . . Tintagiles! Tintagiles! . . . I heard the door close just now . . . I remember! I remember! . . . It must be! [*She beats frantically against the door with hands and feet.*] Oh, monster! monster! It is here that I find you! . . . Listen! I blaspheme! I blaspheme and spit upon you!

[*Feeble knocks are heard from the other side of the door: then the voice of TINTAGILES penetrates very feebly through the iron panels.*]

TINTAGILES. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . .

YGRAINE. Tintagiles! . . . What! . . . what! . . . Tintagiles, is it you? . . .

TINTAGILES. Quick, open, open! . . . She is here! . . .

YGRAINE. Oh! oh! . . . Who? Tintagiles, my little Tintagiles . . . can you hear me? . . . What is it? . . . What has happened? . . .

Tintagiles! . . . Have they hurt you? . . . Where are you? . . . Are you there? . . .

TINTAGILES. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . . Open for me—or I shall die . . .

YGRAINE. I will try—wait, wait . . . I will open it, I will open it. . . .

TINTAGILES. But you do not understand! . . . Sister Ygraine! . . . There is no time to lose! . . . She tried to hold me back! . . . I struck her, struck her . . . I ran . . . Quick, quick, she is coming!

YGRAINE. Yes, yes . . . where is she?

TINTAGILES. I can see nothing . . . but I hear . . . oh, I am afraid, sister Ygraine, I am afraid . . . Quick, quick! . . . Quick, open! . . . for the dear Lord's sake, sister Ygraine! . . .

YGRAINE [*anxiously groping along the door*]. I am sure to find it . . . Wait a little . . . a minute . . . a second. . . .

TINTAGILES. I cannot, sister Ygraine . . . I can feel her breath on me now. . . .

YGRAINE. It is nothing, Tintagiles, my little Tintagiles; do not be frightened . . . if I could only see . . .

TINTAGILES. Oh, but you can see; I can see your lamp from here . . . It is quite light where you are, sister Ygraine . . . Here I can see nothing. . . .

YGRAINE. You see me, Tintagiles? How can you see? There is not a crack in the door . . .

TINTAGILES. Yes, yes, there is; but it is so small! . . .

YGRAINE. On which side? Is it here? . . . tell me, tell me . . . or is it over there?

TINTAGILES. It is here . . . Listen, listen! . . . I am knocking. . . .

YGRAINE. Here?

TINTAGILES. Higher up . . . But it is so small! . . . A needle could not go through! . . .

YGRAINE. Do not be afraid, I am here. . . .

TINTAGILES. Oh, I know, sister Ygraine! . . . Pull! pull! You must pull! She is coming! . . . if you could only open a little . . . a very little. . . I am so small!

YGRAINE. My nails are broken, Tintagiles . . . I have pulled, I have pushed, I have struck with all my might—with all my might! [*She strikes again, and tries to shake the massive door.*] Two of my fingers are numbed. . . . Do not cry. . . . It is of iron. . . .

TINTAGILES [*sobbing in despair*]. You have nothing to open with, sister Ygraine? . . . nothing at all, nothing at all? . . . I could get through . . . I am so small, so very small . . . you know how small I am. . . .

YGRAINE. I have only my lamp, Tintagiles. . . . There! there! [*She aims repeated blows at the gate with her earthenware lamp, which goes out and breaks, the pieces falling to the ground.*] Oh! . . . It has all grown dark! . . . Tintagiles, where are you? . . . Oh! listen, listen! . . . Can you not open from the inside? . . .

TINTAGILES. No, no; there is nothing. . . . I cannot feel anything at all. . . . I cannot see the light through the crack any more. . . .

YGRAINE. What is the matter, Tintagiles? . . . I can scarcely hear you. . . .

TINTAGILES. Little sister, sister Ygraine. . . . It is too late now. . . .

YGRAINE. What is it, Tintagiles? . . . Where are you going?

TINTAGILES. She is here! . . . Oh, I am so weak. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine . . . I feel her on me! . . .

YGRAINE. Whom? . . . whom? . . .

TINTAGILES. I do not know . . . I cannot see. . . . But it is too late now. . . . She . . . she is taking me by the throat. . . . Her hand is at my throat. . . . Oh, oh, sister Ygraine, come to me! . . .

YGRAINE. Yes, yes. . . .

TINTAGILES. It is so dark. . . .

YGRAINE. Struggle—fight—tear her to pieces! . . . Do not be afraid . . . Wait a moment! . . . I am here . . . Tintagiles? . . . Tintagiles! answer me! . . . Help!!! . . . where are you? . . . I will come to you . . . kiss me . . . through the door . . . here—here.

TINTAGILES [*very feebly*]. Here . . . here . . . sister Ygraine . . .

YGRAINE. I am putting my kisses on this spot here, do you understand? Again, again!

TINTAGILES [*more and more feebly*]. Mine too—here . . . sister Ygraine! Sister Ygraine! . . . Oh!

[*The fall of a little body is heard behind the iron door.*]

YGRAINE. Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . . What have you done? . . . Give him back, give him back! . . . for the love of God, give him back to me! . . . I can hear nothing. . . . What are you doing with him? . . . You will not hurt him? . . . He is only a little child. . . . He cannot resist. . . . Look, look! . . . I mean no harm . . . I am on my knees. . . . Give him back to us, I beg of you. . . . Not for my sake only, you know it well. . . . I will do anything. . . . I bear no ill-will, you see. . . . I implore you with clasped hands. . . . I was wrong. . . . I am quite resigned, you see. . . . I have lost all I had . . . You should punish me some other way. . . . There are so many things which would hurt me more . . . if you want to hurt me. . . . You shall see. . . . But this poor child has done no harm. . . . What I said was not true . . . but I did not know. . . . I know that you are very good. . . . Surely the time for forgiveness has come! . . . He is so young and beautiful, and he is so small! . . . You must see that it cannot be! . . . He puts his little arms around your neck: his little mouth on your mouth; and God Himself cannot say him nay . . . You will open the door, will you not? . . . I am asking so little . . . I want him for an instant, just for an instant. . . . I cannot remember. . . . You will understand. . . . I did not have time. . . . He can get through the tiniest opening . . . It is not difficult. . . . [*A long inexorable silence*]. . . . Monster! . . . Monster! . . . Curse you! Curse you! . . . I spit on you!

[*She sinks down and continues to sob softly, her arms outspread against the gate, in the gloom.*]

DAVID GWYNN—HERO OR 'BOASTING LIAR'?
(From 'Historical Problems')

I 'A GALLEY lie' ye call my tale; but he
Whose talk is with the deep kens mighty tales.
The man, I say, who helped to keep you free
Stands here, a truthful son of truthful Wales.
Slandered by England as a loose-lipped liar,
Banished from Ireland, branded rogue and thief,
Here stands that Gwynn, whose life of torments dire
Heaven sealed for England, sealed in blood and fire—
Stands asking here Truth's one reward, belief!

II I see—I see ev'n now—those ships of Spain
Gathered in Lisbon Bay to make the spring,
I feel the curséd oars, I toil again,
And trumpets blare, and priests and choir-boys sing;
And morning strikes with many a golden shaft,
Through ruddy mist, four galleys rowing out,
Four galleys built to pierce the English craft,
Each swivel-gunned for raking fore and aft,
Snouted like sword-fish, but with iron snout.

III And one we call *The Princess*, one *The Royal*,
Diana one; and last that fell *Basana*
Where I am toiling, Gwynn, the true, the loyal
Thinking of mighty Drake and Gloriana.
By Finisterre God sends a hurricane;
Down comes the captain, and quoth he to me—
His Hell-lit eyes blistered with spray and rain—
'Freedom and gold are thine, and thanks of Spain,
If thou canst take the galley through this sea.'

'Ay!

☛ Professor Laughton's introduction to 'State Papers relating to the defeat of the Spanish Armada' lends a revived interest to David Gwynn's 'galley yarn,' which the Professor repudiates. It is treated by Motley as an important episode in the great naval struggle between England and Spain.

IV Ay! ay!' quoth I. The fools unlock me straight,

And soon 'tis I give orders to the Don,

Laughing within to hear the laugh of Fate :

'Soldiers must go below,' quoth I, 'each one!'

Death whispers thus : 'While soldiers sit below

'Twixt slaves, whose hate turns nails and teeth to knives,

Seize thou the muskets ; turn them on the foe ;

But watch with me, before thou strike the blow,

Till thou canst free the stoutest from their gyves.'

V The four queen-galleys pass Cape Finisterre :

The Armada, dreaming but of ocean storms,

Thinks not of British slaves with shoulders bare

Chained, bloody-whealed, and pale on galley forms.

Each, as he rows, hath this my whispered plan

Deep-scriptured in his brain in words of fire :

'Rise every man, and tear to death his man,

Yea, tear as only galley captives can,

When "God's Revenge" sings loud to Ocean's lyre.'

VI Past Ferrol Bay I see each galley stoop,

Shuddering before the Biscay demon's breath—

Down goes a prow—down goes a gaudy poop :

'The Don's *Diana* bears the Don to death,'

Quoth I, 'and, see the *Princess* plunge and wallow

Down purple troughs o'er snowy crests of foam :

See! see! the *Royal*, how she tries to follow

By many a glimmering crest and shimmering hollow,

Where gull and petrel scarcely dare to roam.'

VII And now Death signs to me mid Ocean's din ;

The captain sees the skeleton and pales ;

And when the slaves cry 'Ho for Drake and Gwynn!'

'Teach them,' quoth I, 'the way we swim in Wales!

Sweet strokes are they we deal for old love's sake

When slaves are turned to lords, and lords to slaves.

When captives hold the whip, let drivers quake!

Make every Don, athirst for blood of Drake,

Toast England's Queen in wine of foaming waves.'

Far

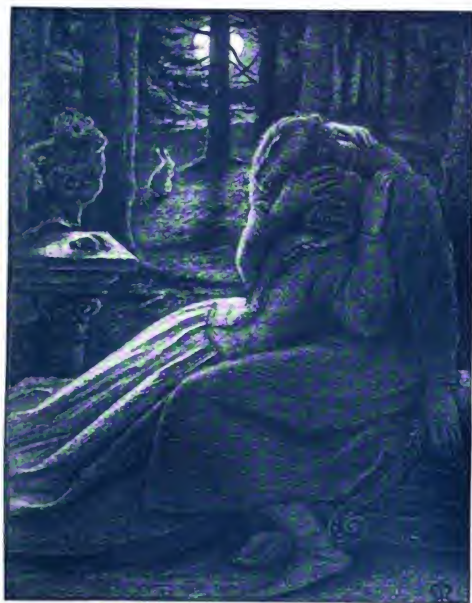
VIII Far off, the *Royal's* captain sees the strife ;
 Her slaves see too—see Freedom coming on.
 'Ye scourge in vain,' quoth I, 'scourging for life
 Slaves who shall row no more to save the Don.'
 'Captives,' I cry, 'your hour is coming swift :
 Through David Gwynn God frees you from your pain ;
 Show Heaven and me your lives are worth the gift !'
 Full soon the captured *Royal* rides adrift :
 'Ask Gwynn,' quoth I, 'for four queen-galleys, Spain—'

IX Spain, who shalt tell, with ashen lips of dread,
 The Welshman's tale—shalt tell in future days
 How Gwynn, the galley slave, once fought and bled
 For England, when she moved through perilous ways !'
 And, now, ye Plymouth seamen, heroes sprung
 From loins of men whose spirits haunt the sea,
 Doth England, she who loves the loudest tongue,
 Remember sons of hers whose deeds are sung
 By yon green billows sworn to hold her free ?

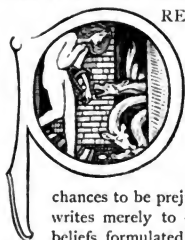
X To think the great new thought or do the deed
 That gilds with richer light the mother-land,
 Or lend her strength of arm in hour of need,
 When eyes of Doom gleam fierce on every hand,
 Is bliss to him whose bliss is working well—
 Is goal and guerdon, too, though boasters loud
 Make brazen music for the leaden crowd,
 Dazzled and deafened by the babbler's spell.

THEODORE WATTS.

☛ LOVE
a brush drawing
by
Sir John Everett Millais, R.A.



THE WORK OF CHARLES RICKETTS



PRE-RAPHAELITE!—the term is accepted, and a singularly individual movement of romanticism in literature and art must needs be content with the ill-formed adjective. But when one sets out on a career of appreciation of an artist who restricts himself to this method of expression that is not, and never was, sympathetic to the masses, it is with no hope of convincing any one who chances to be prejudiced against it. In writing of art, the critic writes merely to convince himself. When he sees his vague beliefs formulated in a sort of creed, it strengthens his own faith, and he feels, no doubt, that he is right; thus he is assured of one convert at least.

But although Mr. Charles Ricketts would probably not refuse to call himself a Pre-Raphaelite, if forced to adopt the nickname of a great school, yet it is also certain that his definition of the aims and ideals conveyed by that word would differ entirely from the current acceptance. The original Brotherhood have recorded their own intentions often enough—a whole literature of misrepresentation has also gathered round the school—so that it is best here to insist that the Pre-Raphaelitism of Mr. Ricketts is best understood by study of his work. In place of attempting to define the expression and show how loyally the artist obeys its most stringent rules, it were best to call attention to his method and his achievements, and let those who will deduce the creed from the practice. For any direct statement of Pre-Raphaelite aims and ideals seems doomed to be misinterpreted; one has but to turn to a journalistic notice of the Arts and Crafts movement, or of the Kelmscott Press editions, or to the criticism of any work concerned with decorative intention, to discover that all the qualities which chance to conflict with the writer's own standard of taste are dubbed impartially 'Pre-Raphaelite' or 'Impressionist,' although for the most part unconcerned with either.

Nor is it needful here to trace the evolution of the Pre-Raphaelite illustration, under the hands of various exponents, from *The Germ* until it was almost totally neglected. The best men of the new movement, that supplanted it for a while, contented themselves with a quiet effort to attain naturalistic effects without striving to keep their work intensely

intensely strained in its expression and full of spirituality. The Pre-Raphaelite ideal has always insisted on a high degree of nervous tension, and this may be taken as the boundary between two domains.

In 1870 the *Graphic* was started, and with it grew rapidly a new influence which, for a time at least, caused the Pre-Raphaelite ideal to be no more sought after. No longer was there even a desire to represent things, with every possible circumstance, closely knit together in a design meant to be pleasant to the eye. In its stead, character in isolation was the ruling motive, with just enough actuality in the background to convey time and space. The pages of *Good Words* or *Once a Week* show this gradual change of front in men working simultaneously. The drawings by Boyd Houghton form a connecting link between the old and new methods, the work of Sir John Millais shows also instances of both manners achieved with equal perfection; but the majority are attracted by newer gods. After the death of Boyd Houghton, Pinwell, and Fred Walker, Charles Keene alone remained faithful to an entirely naturalistic convention, which at the same time escaped the mere prettiness that rapidly degraded the style of others.

The Dalziel Bible Gallery, a monumental attempt to bring black and white up to the level of its earlier triumphs, must not be forgotten. It is curious to find how this book, which to-day appears to be what modern jargon would style an epoch-making document, excited no great sympathy when it was published in 1881, and apparently failed to influence the younger men who might have been expected to swear allegiance to its principles. If you compare those illustrations with the average work at the moment of its publication, you cannot fail to realise how wide a field has been traversed by English draughtsmen, and how often and how irresponsibly they have changed their aims. For this work, prepared many years previously, and detained by accidental circumstances, retained the stately phrase of a grander style. Although its contributors showed singularly unequal merit, the best bade fair, even from their accomplishment therein, to be ranked ultimately among the great black and white artists, irrespective of locality or date.

In his children's toy-books, which have given their author a wider Continental reputation than most people imagine, Mr. Walter Crane created a new impulse. Voluntarily enlisting themselves under the standard he then set up, some twenty years after a school of followers have tardily sprung into being with alarming fecundity; a school that is satisfied for the most part if it can be decorative, ingenuous, and quaint.

Its

Its followers display, it is true, a certain inept alacrity, and no little dexterity of a cumbrous sort, but for the most part lack entirely the real fancy, or the naïve humour which distinguishes the work of Mr. Walter Crane's best period.

Quite recently we have welcomed the drawings by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, cut in wood for the Kelmscott Press editions, and here and there, both in England and on the Continent, are to be seen the first attempts at a new renaissance of the Pre-Raphaelite idea, which, born in England, and peculiar to our country, is nevertheless still regarded as exotic, even by those who could so easily be better informed.

The prominent place of Mr. Ricketts in this movement need not be discussed here; it is already evident to many, and because a large number of these chance to be removed from the parochial influences of contemporary criticism, it seems only logical to accept their opinion as the foreshadowing of a future English verdict. Lookers-on see most of the game; yet it would be foolish to set the verdict of the Continent in opposition to that of the current periodical, were it not that the one is the expression of artists, while the other is chiefly that of journalists.

That much of Mr. Ricketts' earlier work is not accepted by its author as representative in any way, need not be urged against him or it. The unfettered illustrations, produced for no programme, and regardless of exterior criticism, may be said to begin with *The Dial*,

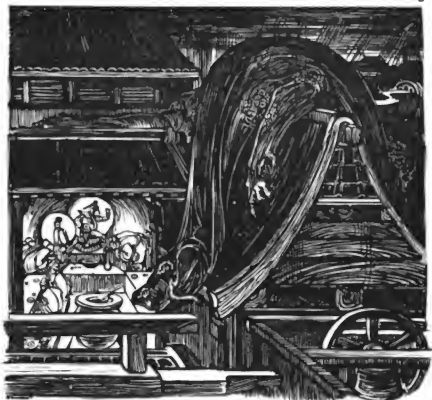
No. 1



No. 1, a magazine privately published, in conjunction with some friends, by the artist, then under the age of twenty-one, at The Vale, Chelsea. This sumptuous quarto, although technically a private enterprise, was sold to the public, and its limited edition exhausted speedily. It found appreciation not merely at home but abroad, and despite its restricted issue, has had no little influence on contemporary workers. This was soon followed by *The House of Pomegranates*, a book which contains illustrations, together with the rather unsuccessful cover of peacocks in gold and ivory, entirely (with the exception of the full-page plates) from Mr. Ricketts' hand. These display, no less surely than the *Dial* illustrations, the peculiar individuality of his style. Later on, the *Poems of Lord de Tabley*, clad in a cover from his design, contained five elaborate illustrations which show the more dramatic, the more substantial, and the more really Pre-Raphaelite aspect of his talent, and are evidence of the survival of the Pre-Raphaelite idea, still possessing the vigour of its first imagination.

All these so far are pen-drawings, reproduced by process—full of intricate dexterity, and abounding in elaborate conceits both of idea and technique. But another side of Mr. Ricketts' art that has engrossed his attention for some years, and still appears to fascinate him most, is conceived in a very different mood. This work, invariably engraved, by its author, is imbued with the spirit of early Italian wood-cutting, and faithful to the convention developed by the artists who illustrated the *Hypnerotomachia*, the *Quadriregio*, and other Venetian and Florentine books. In the Vale editions of *Daphnis and Chloe*, a reprint of Thornley's translation of Longus' idyll, and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, the illustrations throughout are not merely designed, but cut in wood, by the artist; and in their complete unity of idea and handling must needs prove extremely interesting, even to those who fail to sympathise with the spirit of their design. The marriage of art with craft is peculiarly popular among people who talk about the applied arts to-day; but the union often enough appears to be ill-assorted and temporary. Here so absolutely integral is the line conceived and the line resulting, that you cannot dis sever them, even in thought. These illustrations are severe in their direct statement, suave in curve, and full of lavish invention; yet their effects are always gained by the most reticent expression of the idea. Courteous and scholarly, they do not aim to astonish, or to betray mastery of technique. It is surprising, indeed, to compare the *Edipus* (a pen-drawing in the possession of Sir Frederick Leighton) here

here reproduced, with one of the illustrations to the poem of *The Sphinx*. In the earlier work, minute decoration, elaborate symbolism, exquisite daintiness of finish, are carried to their final utterance; in the other,



the adventurous idea is curbed, and the prodigal imagination brought within the most restrained limits. The one leaves unrecorded no facet of the flashing crystal of the idea itself: the most ingenious student can scarce elucidate the many-sided presentation of the subject which is always consistently elaborated to develop the central motive of the composition, while its main intention is apparent at the most casual glance. In the other, the main purpose of the imagined poem in line is directly insisted upon, and reiterated without any comments or similes. Each class appeals to students; but whereas merely intelligent patience may unravel the first, to grasp the intention of the second demands a poetic vision hardly less keenly sustained than that of its author. Such work never has been, and is never likely to be, popular with the multitude. The simplicity of the commonplace they understand; the perplexity of the complex is also sufficiently dazzling to charm, if not to convince, them; but the final simplicity which is not to be appreciated without equal renunciation on the part of the spectator—equal knowledge of his unexpressed but deliberate ignoring of all but the essential—that can never appeal to any but those already in touch with the idea. Merely to be misunderstood is no proof of
genius;

genius ; bad grammar, or infelicitous expression, may accomplish as much ; but to be misunderstood of the careless or ignorant, and yet understood of artistic people, has often been the reward of an artist.

Leaving for a moment the directly pictorial work, one has only to study his designs for covers, and the printed pages of books produced under his direction, to discover even stronger evidence of his influence upon younger men. True it is, that the new crusade to bring together the harmony of the type and its decoration cannot be credited solely to Mr. Ricketts in face of the achievements of the Kelmscott Press. But the artist, in the daring of youth, has combined intense loyalty to precedent, with experiment based on tradition. Saturated with knowledge of the past, his Pegasus has nevertheless shaken its wings and essayed fresh flights. For his first manner, one has but to turn to a prospectus issued to announce the advent of a new *Dial*, or to the title-page of *Silverpoints*, or to still earlier books for which he is responsible, to find absolutely new arrangements of older motives. Fantastic, bizarre, and with splendid audacity, the unalterable *tesserae* of the printer's type are arranged in mosaics that depart from no single tradition, and yet reunite to display a score of fresh devices. In later examples of this class there is a marked change ; despite the success of his improvisations, the importance of style is now more obviously felt, obedience rather than invention is the aim. For this newer work, despite its original appearance, is built on ancient models to an extent scarce suspected by chance observers, because the artist has explored the past very thoroughly and discovered new models worthy of revival, and deduced from them new rules unsuspected heretofore. The legerdemain of a Houdin, prince of jugglers, dealt with gorgeous but impossible objects—cubes and cones wrought with mystic devices, and all the tinselled paraphernalia of the property-man ; that of the great modern exponent of sleight-of-hand astounds you the more, although he juggles with the commonest objects of the household. All your wonder is called forth by the sheer artistry of the consummate master, and by no extraneous adjuncts. Mr. Ricketts' effects, so far, belong to the latter class. From the ordinary types of the best founders he has evolved new triumphs, austere yet seductive, in detail absolutely obedient to self-imposed rules, but in massing and architectural arrangement, novel and vivid, as, for instance, in the *Silverpoints* before mentioned.

Cloth-binding

Cloth-binding, but latterly a thing of horror, has suddenly become illuminated with intelligence; and for this no second name need be coupled with that of Mr. Ricketts. In his splendid decorations for many modern books, too familiar to people of taste to need cataloguing here, he has set up new standards that have been largely appreciated, and unluckily as largely imitated. Take, for instance, a beautiful cover to one



of these books, with its three rigidly symmetrical trees, and you will see that a distinctly Eastern flavour pervades it, yet the spirit of the Renaissance infuses all to a sober simplicity. The richness is obtained by using certain contours and forms sublimated to their most naïve expression. The straight lines of the tree trunks, the absence of any definition of the individual leaves, the domestic fascination of the

K

tiny

tiny flowers, that might have been raised in the garden of a jeweller—all are contrived to afford a curiously romantic pattern, that is old-world in its essence but not in its handling. For these covers contain an entire rule of his own as to how metal stamps should be understood in the decoration of a book. If one looks at merely technical facility in employing the material wisely, the absence of any pictorial detail, the gorgeous effect of plain masses of gold upon the subtly coloured cloths chosen to receive the metal stamped upon its surface—all these subordinate items are worthy of appreciative study, for they are not accidental matters, left to the tradesman's fancy.

In the designs themselves one discovers sufficient material to supply a whole army of hungry designers, and leave many basketsful of fragments to be gathered up. Only a fellow-decorator can fully appreciate this single by-path of Mr. Ricketts' art: only one who has studied pattern-making can entirely realise the new impetus he has given to the craft. Hence it would be foolish to indulge in rhapsodies which would be superfluous to those who know, and unintelligible to the rest.

That his work is prized abroad has been stated here before. That his wood-cutting is a sustained effort to preach anew a truth out of favour at present, is also patent enough; but in returning to Mr. Ricketts' pictures in black and white, one must not forget to insist on the importance of recognising in them a gift of narrative that is happily allied to the research of handling. Invention and technique are poised in masterly balance. On purely typographical grounds one must dissect them, and note the well-arranged changes of line to suit the type destined to be set with the woodcut. Thus when the pictures (as in Lord de Tabley's poems) are inserted as full-page plates, they fulfil a distinct pictorial convention, and hardly consider the type-page; but when (as in *The Sphinx*) they are embedded in the text, they are intensely conventional, and entirely disdain the naturalistic circumstances and intricate workmanship of the earlier book. Yet all the same they equal the earlier fancies in complexity of idea and intensity of situation. Planted among the type they forbear to arrogate supreme importance to themselves. Although dominating the page, they do so with a courteous affectation of being merely decorative adjuncts; yet all the time they maintain their dignity unimpaired. In the illustrations to *The Sphinx*, where the type, sparsely planned to decorate large pages, supplies a modicum of text, the pictures are also in delicate lines,

50 SIR ISUMBRAS OF THE FORD
by
Sir John Everett Millais, R.A.



lines, with masses of white to balance and accord with the matter of the book. The mere spacing of the pages and the placing of the pictures and text in this one volume would suffice, did space permit, to demonstrate the principle of balance and harmony which it is the peculiar aim of Mr. Ricketts to secure.

So much for their technical fascination. In their pictured fancies accompanying *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*, by Lord de Tabley, you are not, as it were, confronted by the plane of the white page. Through it, you gaze into time and space far removed from everyday associations; and the glimpses of things scarce known before brand themselves deep into the memory, with all the fascination of things seen for the first time; for the artist's power of re-edifying the crumbled palaces beyond the gates of ivory is akin to the cunning of a slave of the lamp. Take, for instance, the 'Nimrod,' and note how the impassivity of the stricken hero, with all the accidents of cloud and flame, is rendered more impressive by the oak-sprig in his girdle, plucked from the tree which has since fallen behind him. The lightning still playing on his crown, upon every metallic surface of his spear, and the decoration of his garments, leaves no doubt of the source of the catastrophe. Nor must one fail to recognise the tact of the artist in closing the eyes of the man, who seems to be the only thing remaining alive when all has crumbled about him. To analyse these more minutely, it is interesting to compare the different treatment of the nerveless hand of the Nimrod who has dropped his shield with the searching hands of the figure that represents Death (in the frontispiece 'Death of the Old King'). Nor should one fail to notice the fantasy that depicts this figure picking a laurel wreath to pieces, leaf by leaf, nor the admirable conceit in crowding his lap full of love-letters and locks of hair.

The designs for a forthcoming edition of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, some of which are here given before being cut on the wood, fulfil very different conditions. There is an ingenious touch in making Psyche pensive before the painted representatives of the Loves of the Gods, and one that does not lack humour, elsewhere a not unusual quality in the artist's work, although rarely evident on the surface.

But it would be almost impertinent to attempt to compile a guide-book to the wonderland of Mr. Ricketts' imagination. Only a poet can fully gauge the whole of a poet's meaning. One must remember that
months

months of patient thought in elaborating the germ of an idea, and then presenting it in a way purposely sublimated and reduced to its most meagre essentials, leave no result that he who runs may read. Great ideas slowly shaped require no little study to realise their concealed variety.

As a last word, it may be wise to say that, in the illustrations here reproduced, we see but one side of Mr. Ricketts' art. For, with a single exception, they are all reproductions of pen-drawings made for process, or drawings intended to be, but not already, cut on wood. The little dragon on the roof affords a solitary example of his most expressive manipulation of the yet unappreciated line of the wood-block. The etcher's line has been the subject of many rhapsodies; but the line of the great wood-engraver is still to be commemorated by a perfect eulogy. A line that varies from that of Dürer to the white line of Linton, that can imitate the nervous accent of the brush of Hokusai, or accord gracefully with the labial fluid curves of the great Italians, a line that ranges from the wooden inelegance of the journeyman engraver to the sentient, emotional touch of Mr. Ricketts, is of no slight importance. It can be the meanest or the most beautiful of lines, according to the handling of the one who cuts it, and let us not forget that, unlike the Japanese engraver and the dexterous American engravers, Mr. Ricketts invents the work to be cut; that, even in the past, such men are few in number, and that he already has his following. It is of less importance to decide whether the art of wood-cutting is dying out for popular use, or is being restricted to the highest employment only from the commercial rivalry of process work. While an artist so accomplished and withal so reticent in the mere virtuosity of his craft handles it as Mr. Ricketts can, one need not fear for its immediate future, or doubt that the end of the nineteenth century will leave new masterpieces for the cabinets of future collectors.

The apparently unproductive years, since the last Vale books appeared, do not imply cessation of creative work, but rather denote the conception and elaboration of a new enterprise. Amid the group of books—not merely illustrated, but planned in every detail by Mr. Ricketts—which are on the eve of publication, with a type of his own designing, will be found some notable works that will more than justify the appreciation here set down clumsily, if truly.

The courage of one's convictions has been unduly praised; the really praiseworthy

praiseworthy attitude is surely to possess the undoubted conviction of one's courage. Yet as the first person who tells the truth before its time is usually held to be a proved liar thereby—perhaps it would have been more seemly to refrain from an attempt to formulate opinions not yet accepted by all men of light and leading, although one has no doubt of the final verdict. For an artist so individual and distinctly true to his own ideals, no matter what they may be, as Mr. Ricketts assuredly is, will certainly receive complete appreciation ultimately from those who can consider his work dispassionately, with full documentary evidence of the influence it exerted on his successors, and its relative position among contemporaneous efforts.

GLEESON WHITE.

A D U E T

'FLOWERS nodding gaily, scent in air,
 Flowers posied, flowers in the hair,
 Sleepy flowers, flowers bold to stare—'
 'Oh, pick me some.'

'Shells with lip, or tooth, or bleeding gum,
 Tell-tale shells, and shells that whisper "Come,"
 Shells that stammer, blush, and yet are dumb—'
 'Oh, let me hear.'

'Eyes so black they draw one trembling near,
 Brown eyes, caverns flooded with a tear,
 Cloudless eyes, blue eyes so windy clear—'
 'Oh, look at me.'

'Kisses sadly blown across the sea,
 Darkling kisses, kisses fair and free,
 Bob-a-cherry kisses 'neath a tree—'
 'Oh, give me one.'—
 Thus sang a queen and king in Babylon.

T. STURGE MOORE.

50 TALE OF A NUN



SMALL good cometh to me of making rhyme ;
so there be folk would have me give it up,
and no longer harrow my mind therewith.

But in virtue of her who hath been both
mother and maiden, I have begun the tale
of a fair miracle, which God without doubt
hath made show in honour of her who fed
him with her milk.

Now I shall begin and tell the tale of a
nun. May God help me to handle it well, and bring it to a good
end, even so according to the truth as it was told me by Brother
Giselbrecht, an ordained monk of the order of Saint William ; he, a
dying old man, had found it in his books.

The nun of whom I begin my tale was courtly and fine in her
bearing ; not even nowadays, I am sure, could one find another to be
compared to her in manner and way of looks. That I should praise her
body in each part, exposing her beauty, would become me not well ; I
will tell you, then, what office she used to hold for a long time in the
cloister where she wore veil. Custodian she was there, and whether it
were day or night, I can tell you she was neither lazy nor slothful. Ever
was she quick to do her work, ringing the bell in church, making ready
with the ornaments and lights, and causing the whole convent to rise
in due time.

This maiden was not free from Love, who is wont to work so great
wonders over all the world. Sometimes he bringeth shame and torment
and sorrow ; sometimes joy and happiness. Who is wise he maketh so
foolish that he must needs come to grief whether willing or unwilling.
Another he so vanquisheth that he knows no more whether to speak or
to be dumb be to his boon. Many a one he trampleth under foot, who
may not rise but when he giveth leave. Others Love causeth to be
generous

51 The ' Tale of a Nun,' given here in an English form, is translated from the verse of a
medieval Dutch legend, written probably about the year 1320 by an author whose name is now
unknown. The origin of the legend is to be found in *Caesarii Cisterciensis monachi in*
Heisterbacho, Dialogus miraculorum, where, in *Distinctio Septima*, cap. xxxv., a short story
of the Virgin's miraculous intervention is given. Readers of medieval French literature, who
know Méon's collection of *Fabliaux*, will be able to compare the French and Dutch versions,
and no doubt will agree that the latter has the better claim to a rendering into English.

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generous who would fain keep their gifts to themselves, were it not for Love inspiring them. Also one shall find folk so true one to the other, that whatsoever Love bringeth them, be it little or great, bliss, joy, or sorrow, they bear it both together. Such Love I call true.

Nor could I ever tell you of all the happiness and misery that flow out of the brooks of Love. Therefore one should not condemn the nun that she could not escape from Love, which kept her fast in his net. For the fiend seeketh always to tempt man, and taketh no rest night or day, but bringeth all his wiles to work.

By vile cunning, as best he could, so did he tempt the nun that she believed she must die. Unto God she bade, and implored Him that He should comfort her by His grace. 'How burdened I am by strong love and wounded, He knoweth to Whom all things are open, from Whom naught is hidden, nor how that this weakness shall lead me astray. I must lead a new life ; I must lay off this garment.'

Now, hearken, how she fared further on :

She sent word to the young lord to whom she bore such deep love, with a letter full of sweet passion, praying him to make haste to come to her, and it should be to his boon. The messenger went to where dwelt the young lord, who took the letter and read what his friend had sent to him. Then he was joyful in his mind and hastened to come to her. Ever since they had been twelve years old, had these two borne love together, suffering great dole from it.

So fast as he could, he rode unto that nunnery where she was to be found. Before the little window he sat down, and would fain see her and speak to his love, if that might be. No long time did she tarry, but came before the little window which was crossed all over with bars of iron.

Many a time they heaved a sigh, he sitting without and she within, so deep was the love that troubled them. For so long a while did they sit there that I could not tell you how oft she changed her colour. 'Oh, me !' she said ; ' Oh, my sweet friend, my chosen love, I am in such grief ; do speak unto me one word or two that may comfort my heart ! I am so longing for thy solace, the arrow of love stings so in my heart, that heavy dole have I to suffer ; never may I be glad again till thou hast drawn it forth.'

He answered her soothingly. ' You know quite well, dear love, how long we have borne love to each other all our days, and yet never

was

was so much leisure ours that we might kiss each other for once. May God doom our Lady Venus, the goddess who hath so steeped our senses with this longing, in that she causes two such tender flowers to fade and to wither away! If only I could entreat you to lay down your veil and name a set time when you would give me leave to lead you hence, I would fare out at once and get you made fine costly attire, of woollen cloth lined with fur—mantle, skirt, and tunic. Never in any distress will I forsake thee; with thee, my love, will I adventure life, its sweetness and sourness: take, now, my troth in plight!’

‘My well-beloved, dear friend,’ quoth the damsel, ‘most gladly will I take from thee that pledge, and go so far away with thee that no one in this cloister shall know whither we have fled. To-night—a week on—come here, and wait for me outside, in yonder orchard under a sweet-briar! There wait for me, and I will come out to be your bride, and go with you wheresoever you choose. Unless it be that sickness trouble me, or other hindrance make it too heavy for me, be well assured that I shall be there, and I beseech thee to be there also, my lief lord!’

So they made promises each unto other. Then he took leave, and went where his steed stood saddled, and, without tarrying, took horse and rode away in haste across green meadows till he came to the city.

There in naught was he forgetting of his dear love. On the morrow, going his round of the city, he bought for her blue and scarlet cloth, and had it made into a fine mantle and cape, with skirt and tunic to match, each of them well lined, the best that might be. No one ever saw better stuff worn under lady’s attire; they that looked on it all praised it. Knives, girdles, pouches, both good and costly, did he buy; gold rings, head-gear, and many kinds of treasure; all those treasures did he purchase that are becoming to a well-bred bride. Also he took with him five hundred pounds of silver, and one night at dusk went forth from the town by stealth. All that costly gear he carried with him, well piled on the back of his steed, and so rode on to the nunnery till he came into the orchard under a sweet-briar, as she had said.

Then he sat down on the grass and waited for his well-beloved to come forth.

Of him now I shall not speak for a while, but will tell you about that fair, dainty she.

Before

Before midnight she rang the bells to first prime, and was in great dole through love. Then when matins had been sung by all the nuns, elder and younger of the convent, and when all had retired to their common dormitory, she alone remained in the choir, muttering her prayer as she was wont to do. She knelt down before the altar, and in deep dread spake she :

‘Maria, Mother, name sweet, no longer may my body wear this habit. All ways and at all times thou knowest the heart and soul of man. I have fasted and prayed and done myself bodily grief, yet it is all in vain that I chasten myself. Love has me in thrall, and I must take me to the world’s ways. So verily, as Thou, my dear Lord, hast been hung between two thieves, and hast been stretched along the Cross, and hast brought resurrection to Lazarus while he lay a dead man in his grave, so must Thou know my pains, and pardon my misdoing. I must fall deeply into heavy sin.’

After this she turned from the choir unto a statue of Our Lady, before which she knelt down and said her prayer. ‘Maria,’ spake she without fear, ‘night and day have I cried, and meekly laid my sorrow before thee ; yet I have never been one straw the better for it. My mind would give way altogether were I to remain any longer in this habit.’ So she put off her veil and laid it upon the altar of the Blessed Virgin ; her shoes she untied, and behold, the keys of the Sacristy she hung before the statue of Mary. This she did, as I will explain to you, in order that they might be found with ease when sought for at early prime, for none would ever pass by the statue of Mary but would cast a glance thereto, and mutter ‘Ave’ before going thence.

Clad only in her smock, driven thereto by necessity, she went out by a door which was known to her : she opened it cunningly, and passed through it by stealth without making a sound. Trembling she came into the orchard, and was seen then by the young lord, who, drawing near, said : ‘Yea, sweet one, do not fear ; it is your friend whom you meet here.’ But as they were standing thus, she was covered with shame, because she had on naught save her smock. Howbeit, said he, ‘O body most fair, far better would beautiful attire and rich raiment befitt you : if you will not be angry with me, therefore, I will give them straightway into your hands.’ So they went together under the sweet-briar, and there he gave to her whatsoever she might need in two changes of clothes (blue was the one which there she put on, and well
it

☛ ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
a chalk drawing
by
Will Rothenstein



it fitted her). Lovingly looked he on her, and said : ' My beloved, far better does the blue suit you than did ever the grey ! ' Also she put on two silk stockings, and two shoes of Cordova leather, that became her better than the lappet-shoes she had worn before. Also he gave her a head-gear of white silk to throw over her head. Then the young lord kissed her lovingly on the mouth ; and it seemed to him while thus she stood before him that the day unveiled itself in beauty.

In haste he went to his steed, and made her mount before him in the saddle ; and on they rode together till, in the gathering light, they saw that none followed after them. And as day began to shine in the east, she said, ' O Lord, solace of all the world, now Thou must have charge of us, for day is breaking ! Ah ! if I had not come out unto thee, I should have been ringing the bells for first mass, as I was wont to do in the convent. Great fear have I that I shall live to repent this flight. The world holds so ill to its word ; ' tis like the cunning hawker who sells counterfeit gold rings for true ones.'

' Ah, me ! what sayest thou, my pure one ? May God damn me if ever I should forsake thee ! Whithersoever we go, I shall not leave thee, unless it be that Death bring severance between us ! How is it that thou shouldst be doubting of my good faith ? Thou hast not found me a man cunning or untruthful toward thee. From that moment, when I chose you to be my love, not even an empress could have won hold on my mind ; and even were I worthy of her, I would not leave thee for her sake. Be full sure of this, dear love ! With me I bear five hundred pounds of white silver : of all these shalt thou be mistress, sweet. And though we go to a foreign country, we shall have no need to pledge anything till a seven year be gone.'

Thus riding on, they came that morning near to a forest wherein were birds making great melody among themselves. So loudly did they pipe, one might hear it any way off. Each sang according to its kind. In the green grass stood beautiful flowers, full-blown, shedding abroad their sweet scents. The sky was clear and bright ; and many a tall tree flourishing in full leaf stood there.

The young lord looked at the pure maid, for whom he bore love so constantly, and said : ' Dear love, if so it pleaseth thee, why should we not get down and gather flowers ? So fair seems this place, let us here play the game of love ! ' ' What sayest thou, villain churl ? Shall I lie down on the grass like a vile woman that must sell her body for

for gold ; then must I have little shame in me ! Never wouldst thou have spoken to me so, if thou were not basely bred. Well may it cause me pain ; may God damn one who could think of such a thing ! Now, speak not again of it ; but listen to the birds in the valleys how they sing and are glad ; and the time shall not be long to thee. When once I am lying with thee naked on a well-appointed bed, ay then thou mayst do as thou longest and as thy heart desires ; but great pain have I at heart that thou shouldst have put this to me now.'

Quoth he, 'My dear, nay, do not scorn me thus: it was Venus herself that did inspire me. God may bring me to shame and grief if ever I let speak of it again !' And spake she, 'Then I will forgive thee. Thou art my solace above all men that live under Heaven. If fair Absolom were alive now, and I full sure that I might live with him a thousand years in exceeding joy and rest, I should not wish for it. Beloved, so I set thee before all, that nothing might be offered me for which I would forsake thee. Were I sitting in Heaven, and thou here on earth, surely I would come down to thee. Nay, God, punish me not for that I have talked thus foolishly ! To the least of the joys of Heaven no earthly joy may compare ; there so perfect is the smallest joy, that the soul longs not but to worship God without end. All earthly things are but poor, and not worth a hair as against those one meets with in Heaven. Well are they counselled that suffer for it, though I have to go astray and fall into deep sin for thee, my well-beloved, my beautiful friend'

Thus they spake and exchanged sayings as they rode across mountains and valleys. Naught would it behove me to tell you what passed between them. On they rode till they were come to a town's gate lying in a valley. So well did they like that place that they remained there for seven years, leading a joyous life in the embraces of love, and had together two children. Then after those seven years, when all their money was spent, they had to live on the goods which they had brought with them ; clothes, ornaments, and horses, these they sold at half their value ; and soon they had again spent all. And now they knew not by what means to live ; for not even a skirt could she spin, or by that something might have been earned.

And there came a time when meat and wine and provisions and all things that are for food grew very dear ; and much suffering they had

to

to bear. Far rather had they died than begged for bread ; and poverty brought parting between them, though it grieved them sore. The man it was who first broke troth ; he left her behind him in heavy sorrow, and went back again into his own land. Never they beheld each other again ; there remained with her two children very beautiful to look upon.

Said she : ' Now at last that has happened which was ever my dread early and late ; I have remained behind in bitter suffering. He in whom I had placed all my trust has forsaken me. Mary, Virgin, if thou would but pray for me and my two little ones, that we may not perish with hunger ! But what shall I, wretched woman, begin to do ? Both body and soul I must foul by wrong-doing. Ay, Virgin Mary, come to mine aid ! Even if I could spin a skirt, I would not make by it one loaf of bread in a fortnight. I cannot help myself ; I must go outside the walls, and in the fields earn money with my body, wherewith to buy meat. For my two children I may not forsake.'

And thus she entered into a sinful life. In truth, I have been told that for seven years she lived as a common woman, and became laden with many a sin. Dearly did she loathe it, and was hard pushed from it ; but did it for a poor wage, by which she made provision for her children. What good would come were I to tell you them all—the shameful and heavy sins in which she thus lived for fourteen years ?

Yet whatever sorrow or repentance befell, never did she forget, but every day said the Seven Dolours in honour and praise of our Lady, praying to her to be set free from those acts of sin wherewith she was burdened.

Now, when the fourteen years of her sinful life with her beloved knight, and that which followed, were ended, God put into her heart such deep contrition that she would rather have had her head cut from her body by a bare sword than again give up her flesh to sin as she had been wont. Night and day she cried, with eyes never dry from tears ; and said she : ' Mary, Cradle of God, highest fountain of all womanhood, do not thou forsake me in my distress ! I call upon thee, Our Lady, to witness how I sorrow for my sins, and how deep is the grief they cause me ; so many they be, I cannot tell where or with whom they were done. Alas, what shall be my fate ! Well may I tremble for the last judgment where all sins will appear revealed,

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whether

whether of poor or of rich, and all those will be punished that have not before been told in confession and done penance for. Well do I know this, and can have no doubt of it; therefore do I live in such great dread. Even if I went about in sackcloth, crawling upon bare feet and hands from place to place, I could not win absolution unless thou, Mary, were to take pity upon me. Fount of Mercy, so many hast thou stood by! Yea, though I am a sinful woman, a wretched caitiff, yet remember, Mary, that whatever life I led, never did I forget to read a prayer in honour of thee. Be gracious unto me, for I am one full of woe and in great need of thy solace; therefore I do well to implore it. Thou Bride, chosen of God, thy Son when He made annunciation of Himself to thee at Nazareth, sent thee a salutation such as never messenger before had spoken; therefore are these same words so well favoured of thee that whosoever hath it in his heart to say to thee, "Ave Maria!" to him thou avowest thanks. Were he fallen into deepest sin thou wouldst gain grace for him, and be advocate for him with thy Son.'

To such prayers and bewailings the sinner gave herself for many days. At last she took a child in each hand, and wandered with them in great poverty from place to place living upon charity. So far did she traverse the country that at last she found herself back again near the convent where she had lived as a nun. At a late hour, after the sun had set, she came to the house of a widow, and begged that, for the sake of charity, she might rest there for the night. 'I could not very well send you away with your little ones,' said the widow. 'How tired they look! Do you sit down, and take some rest; and I will give you of what the good Lord has bestowed on me, for the honour of His dear Mother.' Thus she stayed with her two children, and would fain have known how matters stood in her old convent. 'Tell me,' she said, 'my good woman, is this a nuns' convent?' 'In truth, yes,' answered she, 'and, on my faith, a magnificent one it is, and rich. Nowhere would one find another to equal it. The nuns that live there have not their like for virtue; never did I hear tell of any of them a rumour to their shame.'

The woman, sitting there beside her children, said: 'How canst thou say such a thing? for I have heard much talk of late about a certain nun; if I mistake not she must have been monitress here. She that told me spake no lie; fourteen years it must be now since she fled from

from the convent, and no one has heard tell of her since, nor knows where she may have died.' Then the widow grew angry, and said: 'It seems to me as if thou wert mad; nor will I have thee here to repeat such evil things about the monitress. All that time she has been here, and never did she fail in her duty unless her health gave way. He would be worse than a vile dog who could say anything of her but good. She has as pure a mind as ever nun had; were you to search all the cloisters that are built between the river Elbe and the Garonne I am sure you could find no nun that leads a holier life.'

The woman who had so long been soiled by sin,—ay, how wonderful this talk seemed to her! And she spake thus: 'Wilt thou make known to me by what names her father and her mother were called?' Then she named them both, and Beatrice knew well that it was herself that was meant. O God! how she wept at night, kneeling before her bed, and praying. 'No other pledge,' she cried, 'but my deep penitence have I to offer thee; and yet, O Mary, come to mine aid! Such grief have I for my sins that if I saw a furnace hot and red, so burning and fiery that the flames tongued out of its mouth, I would be fain to creep therein, could that but free me from my sins. Lord, Thou art loath to see man in misery; on this I will put my trust, and will ever hope for solace, though I be in anguish and great dread. Thy loving-kindness cannot be brought to an end, no more than one can scoop out the great sea in one day, and lay bare its nether deeps. Never was sin so terrible that could not win pardon by Thy grace; how, then, shall I be shut away from Thy mercy, since my sins are so hateful to me.'

While she was thus stretched in prayer, a heaviness came on all her limbs, and, without knowing, she fell asleep. And while thus she was lying in her sleep, it seemed, in a vision, that a voice called to her: 'Woman, so long hast thou lifted thy lamentation that Mary has taken pity on thee, and has prayed for thee that thou mayst be free from condemnation. Now, get thee in haste unto this cloister; the doors, the same through which thou fleddest with thy love, thou shalt find opened wide. And all thine attire thou shalt find lying upon the altar, the veil, and the habit, and the shoes; thou shalt put them on without fear. Then for all this thou shalt render Mary high thanks. The keys also of the sacristy which thou didst lay before her statue on that night when thou wentest away, so well hath she cared for them that in all these

these years no one has found thee missing. So well is Mary thy friend, that in the very image of thee she took up thine office. This, O sinner, hath our Lady of Heaven done for thee. By her command thou shalt return unto thy cloister: there is no one on thy bed there. Hearken, it is in God's name that I speak unto thee.'

It was not long after this that she started out of her sleep. 'God, Lord Almighty,' quoth she, 'nay, do not let the fiend throw me into heavier grief than that from which I now suffer! If I were now to go into that convent and be taken for a thief, then I should be in yet deeper shame than when first I left the nunnery, I beseech thee, good Lord, by Thy precious Blood which ran out of Thy side, if the voice that has spoken be really to my boon, then let it not cease, but make me to hear it once again; yea, even a third time; then shall I know that I may return to the cloister, and will extol and praise Mary for it without end.'

Now hearken, the next night a voice seemed to come thus admonishing her: 'Woman, thou makest too long tarrying! Go back into thy convent, there God shall solace thee. Do what Mary commandeth thee. Her messenger I am, Doubt it not any more.'

But although this was the second message bidding her to return, even yet dared she not venture. A third night she waited and prayed. 'If it be fiend's folly that is practised upon me, then put an end to the devil's power and malice. And if so be he appear again to-night, Lord, put him to such confusion that he must fly out of the house, having no power to do me harm. Now, Mary, be thou my help. If thou hast sent a voice to bid me back into the nunnery, by thy Child, I beseech thee, make me hear it a third time to-night.'

So she watched a third night: and a voice came forth from the power of God, with an all-prevailing light, saying: 'Thou doest wrong not to fulfil what I have commanded thee, for it is Mary who speaks through me. Thou mayst tarry all too long. Go into the cloister without trembling: the door stands wide open for thee, so thou mayest pass where thou wilt: and thou shalt find thine attire waiting for thee upon the altar.'

When the voice had thus spoken, the sinner beheld the radiance; and she said: 'Now I may doubt no longer; this voice is my Lord's,
and

and this message is Mary's. It comes to me in a radiance so beautiful, well, now, may I feel sure! And therefore I will not be disobedient; I will go into the cloister and do this with a good faith in our Lady's solace. My children I will commend to God, our Father; in His care they will be safe.'

Then she took off her clothes and covered them with them silently so that they should not wake; and kissing them both on the lips: 'Children, fare you well!' said she, 'I leave you here in our Lady's good keeping. Had she not pleaded for me and given me release, I would never have forsaken you for all the riches of Rome.'

Hear what she did next. In a trance, all alone, she went toward the nunnery. When she came through the orchard she found the door open for her, and went in without trembling: 'Mary, I thank thee, now I am safely within these walls; may God make good adventure befall me further on!'

Wherever she came the door stood wide open for her; and in the chapel, where on the altar she had laid off her habit fourteen years ago, truly I tell you, that on the same spot she found it all again, shoes, and habit, and veil. She put them on in haste, and kneeling down cried: 'Lord of the realm of Heaven, and thou, Virgin Mary, Immaculate, blessed must ye be! Thou, Mary, art the flower of all virtue. In thy pure maidenhood thou borest a Child without sorrow, that shall be Lord for evermore. Thou art the chosen of Grace; thy Child made heaven and earth; the Lord, our Saviour, thou mayst command as Mother, and He may greet thee, His well-beloved daughter. For all this I live in better ease; for whosoever seeketh grace from thee, he findeth it though he may come late. Thy help is so high that my sorrow and grief in which I have been living so long have been changed by thee into joy and blessing. Well may I give blessing unto thee!'

And before our Lady's statue, where she had hung them once, lo! she found again the keys of the sacristy. She hung them upon her belt, and went into the choir, where she found the lamps burning in every corner. Thence she went to the place of the prayer-books, and laid each one on its own desk, as often she had done before; and again she prayed to Mary to save her from all misfortune, and have her poor children in good keeping, whom she had left at the widow's house in great sorrow.

Meanwhile the night had worn away, and the clock began to strike,
sounding

sounding the midnight chime. And now she caught hold of the bell-rope and began to ring for matins, so regularly as to be clearly heard all over the convent. And those who had been sleeping in the dormitory came down all without tarrying, and none of them knew what had happened. Thus she stayed in the convent without reproach or disgrace. The sinner was saved in honour of Mary, the Virgin of Heaven, who never forsakes her friends in their distress and anxiety.

This lady having now turned to be a nun as before, I will not forget her two children whom she had left behind at the widow's house in great need. Neither bread nor money had they; and I could ill tell you into what deep grief they fell when they no longer found their mother. The widow came and sat by them in true pity; and said she: 'I will take these two children to the abbess of the convent; God will certainly put it into her heart to be good to them.' Then she dressed them in their clothes and shoes, and took them with her to the convent. Quoth she: 'My lady, see the need of these two orphans; their mother has left them at my house, and has gone her way—I know not whether to east or west: and now these poor ones are helpless, though I would fain do for them what I could.' The abbess answered, 'Keep them with you, I will recompense you for it; and you shall not complain that they have been left with you. Every day they shall receive of God's charity. Send some one here daily for meat and drink, and, should they be in want of anything, forget not to let me know.'

Full glad was the widow now that all this had thus come about; she took the children with her, and cared well for them. And now how happy was the mother who had nursed them and suffered for them, when she knew them to be in such good keeping; from that time she needed no longer to have for them any fear or dread.

But while she was thus leading a holy life, much sighing and trembling was hers night and day; for the bewailing of her great sins lay heavily upon her, yet dared she not avow them, or openly make confession of them.

At length one day there arrived an abbot who was wont to visit the sisterhood once a year to know whether anything shameful had happened which might bring blame on them. The same day that he came, the sinner lay down in deep prayer within the choir, wrought with

☛ L'OISEAU BLEU
after a water-colour drawing
by
Charles Conder



with doubt and inward struggle. But the devil so pressed her with heavy shame that she dared not lay bare her sinful deeds before the abbot. While thus she lay and prayed, she saw moving toward her a youth who was all in white. Naked in his arms lay a child that to her seemed to be quite dead. The youth was throwing an apple up and down and catching it before the child, playing to it. This the nun at her prayers saw well, and said: 'Friend, if so be thou art a messenger of Heaven, in God's name I do beseech thee to tell me and not hide from me why thou art thus playing to the child with yon fair red apple, while yet it lies a dead body in thine arms? Thy playing, therefore, cannot move it one hair.' 'Forsooth, dame, thou speakest truly; the child does not know of my playing little or much. It is dead, and hears not nor sees. Even so, God knoweth not how thou prayest and fastest. It is all labour lost to chastise thyself. So deeply art thou buried in sin that God cannot hear thy prayer. I admonish thee, go straightway to the abbot, thy father, and make confession of all thy sins without cloak or deceit. Do not be misled by devils prompting! Absolution of all thy sins shalt thou receive from the holy abbot. Shouldst thou not dare to speak, the Lord will punish thee heavily for them.' With that the youth disappeared, nor even showed himself again.

Well had she understood all that he said. So, early the next morning, she went and found the abbot, and prayed him to hear her confession from word to word. The abbot was a full wise man, and said he: 'Dear daughter, I will certainly not refuse this. Examine thyself well of all, so that thou hide from me nothing of thy sins.' Then, at that moment she went and set herself down by this holy father, and opened to him her whole life. Whatsoever thing had befallen her she hid it not then; and what she knew in the depth of her heart, she made it all known to the wise abbot. When she had now finished her full confession the abbot spoke: 'Daughter, I will give thee remission of the sins that trouble thee, of which thou hast now made confession. Praised and blessed be Mary our Mother, most holy.' With that he laid his hand upon her head and gave her pardon. And quoth he: 'In a sermon will I tell thy whole story, and devise it so cunningly that on thyself and thy children no blame shall fall. It would be unjust to withhold this miracle which God hath done in honour of His Mother. Everywhere will I tell it, in good hope that thereby many a man may be converted and learn to honour our blessed Lady.'

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Before he went he told to all the sisterhood what had happened unto a nun, but there was no one that knew who she was ; a close secret did it remain. And when he made farewell, both her children he took with him, and clothed them in grey ; and both of them became good monks. Their mother's name was Beatrice.

Give praise to Mary and to her Son our Lord whom she nursed, for that she brought to pass this fair miracle, and freed her from all her pains. And we all of us that hear or read it, let us pray that Mary may be our advocate in the sweet valley where God shall sit and doom the world. AMEN.

A HANDFUL OF DUST



TRAVELLER wandered by night amid the ruins of an immense forsaken palace. Through portals of marble and passages of porphyry, he at length attained a little inner court which had been the private garden of the princess, underneath the window of her chamber. The degenerated shoots of the rose and myrtle were still contending for existence with the strangling crop of wild plants; otherwise, it retained no trace of ancient culture but a mutilated tomb and a dry fountain. The traveller seated himself upon the former, and remained absorbed in meditation, until the setting moon admonished him that he must withdraw if he would not lose the light which had hitherto guided him among the intricacies of the ruins. Starting up, he sought for some fragment of agate or malachite from the tomb to bear away as a relic. Seeing nothing of this kind, he thrust his hand through a cavity in the side of the sepulchre and seized the first object that met his grasp, which proved to be a handful of dust. As he withdrew his hand it was sharply caught by a long ragged briar springing on an adjoining mound, which seemed to urge its growth in the direction of the sepulchre, as though to surmount and clasp it. The smart was so severe that his hand unclosed, and shed its contents on the hillock, but he instantly stooped and picked them up, mingled with some of the brown and fetid mould which bestrewed the latter. He then enclosed the entire handful in a silken pouch, and quitted the ruins. On regaining his own country he deposited the sepulchral relic in a jasper urn, and placed this in a niche in his sleeping apartment.

The traveller's dwelling was situated in the midst of a large garden, remote from the noise of the busy capital. The land was southern, with a genial climate, and warm, brilliant nights. Hence, he was accustomed to late vigils—times of meditation on what he had seen and learned. The seclusion of the site, the tranquillity of the scene, and the nature of his reflections, contributed to enkindle a naturally exalted spirit, and to attune perceptions originally refined, until the mystic harmonies and rarely apprehended accents of Nature gradually became familiar to him. He would hearken and strive to interpret

interpret the rustling of leaves, the stirring of insects, the vague lisplings of the night wind; nay, he sometimes seemed to surprise stray notes of the entrancing music which accompanies the sublime, but for most the silent, procession of the stars. It was, therefore, with the less astonishment that he one night heard tones distinctly proceeding from the jasper urn that contained the handful of dust. He listened intently, and clearly distinguished two voices: one a woman's, plaintive and distressed; the other a man's, imperious and exulting.

'Little, disdainful Princess, didst thou deem that it would ever be thus!'

'Alas, no!' sighed the other voice.

'The slave thou didst so scorn is now as closely blended with thyself as thy spirit with thy frame. The eyes are as the eyes on which they gazed, the neck is as the foot that trod it into the dust.'

'Wretch!' rejoined the other speaker. 'Know that whatever disaster may have overtaken the Princess's frame, her spirit is still her own and lives on to spurn, to detest, to defy thee.'

'Detestation and defiance sound marvellously well in my ears,' rejoined the slave. 'Time was when thou didst but despise.'

'As I do now,' replied the Princess.

'Not so. Detest thou mayest, despise thou canst not. Thy bondage galls too sore, and escape from it there is none. Were our atoms flung upon the hurricane, mine should pursue thine upon its wings; were we strewn upon the ocean, its billows should bear us away together. Nothing can wholly sunder us but that which shall one day subdue all, the elemental strength of Fire.'

'O, Fire!' exclaimed the Princess, 'at whose bidding wilt thou resolve me into my essence, and purge me from the stain of this abhorred companionship?'

'At mine!' cried the traveller; and, arising hastily, he seized the urn, and poured the contents into the flame of his lamp. A jet of light flashed up, and immediately divided itself into two fiery tongues, one white with a dazzling lustre, the other murky and lurid. For a moment the traveller seemed to have a confused perception of somewhat ethereal borne upwards, and of some wingless thing falling heavily to earth; but instantly the flames sank, his lamp resumed its accustomed steady radiance, and no sound disturbed his musings as he sat gazing on the jasper urn, now devoid of every particle of dust.

R. GARNETT.

WILHELM MEINHOLD (27 Jan. 1797—Nov. 31, 1851)



THE historic novel might be set aside as wholly inartistic and impossible were it not for a few examples of distinct beauty and power in this singular form. Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, though not one of his finest works, is yet excellent in parts. Balzac has greatly triumphed in this style. Scott does not approach the intensity of Balzac, though his historic novels made an epoch and are, of course, remarkable. With Dumas the local colour is barely more than a convention. The essence of the *Three Musketeers* is not their costume but the play of incident and character. Some of our modern English hands have essayed the adventures of the historic romance with quite respectable success, but scarcely with complete victory. As far as we know, neither in Italy nor Spain has any man gone near these in excellence; but, and this is passing strange, considering the signal badness of German novels (that most miserable Ekkehart, for example), a Pomeranian pastor of this century has written two of the very first rank. Naturally, with German taste as it is—and as, in spite of French and Norwegian influence, it is likely to be for some time—Meinhold has been little honoured in his own country, though Göthe gave him sound advice when he asked for it; and Frederick William IV. of Prussia not only understood the wonderful power of his work, but with princely courtesy printed one of his two great stories for him unasked. The Bavarian king has earned the poet's praise and the musician's love by his real sympathy with the highest art, but cases such as this and that of Rückert should plead favourably for the Hohenzollern.

Wilhelm Meinhold's was a curious personality: fiercely individual as Beddoes, with an instinct that brought him not only to assimilate details, but to enter easily into the very life and feeling of the past, as it has been given to few men to do. One, too, that saw through the vulgar popular ideas of his day, and took refuge from cant and noisy insincerity and cowardly lack of patriotism in historic studies and intellectual interests, not without turning occasionally to smite the yelping curs he despised. Small wonder that a man of his sympathies, who of course scorned the futilities of Lutheran apologetic, should have felt drawn toward the old Church of the West, with its more antique,
more

more dignified, more mysterious associations. He wanted an atmosphere more highly charged with the supernatural than the hard, dry, cast-iron traditions of his own sect could supply.

The portrait (prefixed to the edition of 1846 of his collected works) shows a type not uncommon in Ireland: round head domed up from a fine brow; keen level eyes behind the student's glasses; straight well-shaped nose, not of the largest; good firm mouth, and well-turned chin. Shrewd, obstinate, not to be convinced save by himself, persistent, observant, and keen in feeling and word and deed—so one would judge the nature from the face.

That Meinhold should have deigned to use his two notable stories as controversial weapons against his uncritical and bemused adversaries is curious enough, but it is not necessary to suppose that *Sidonia* and *Maria* were composed for the sole purpose of puzzling the Sadducees. In the case of the *Cloister Witch*, he had the story in hand as far back as 1831, and two of his early poems come from the drama he had first written; while the censor, with instinctive dread of true talent, of course withheld his favour from the *Pastor's Daughter*, a play founded on the story that was to grow into the *Amber Witch*.

It was not till after a fair amount of poetical and controversial work that our author, in 1843, issued his *Amber Witch* in book-form, and had the wonderful luck to find a gifted woman to clothe it in appropriate English form. There is lying at my hand a little pocket Tasso, with the pretty autograph, 'Lucie Duff Gordon, Wurtzburg, 1844,' a relic of the girl whose pen naturalised at once a work that is probably more widely known here, and far better appreciated, thanks to her, than in Germany. Meinhold gracefully appreciated his translator's skilful work, and *Sidonia* was dedicated, on its first appearance in 1848, to

der jungen geist-reichen Uebersetzerin
der Bernstein-Hexe.

It was not Sarah Austin's daughter, but Mrs. R. W. Wilde, the *Speranza* of the *Nation*, who turned the *Cloister Witch* into English, and she, too, had well earned a dedication if the novelist had lived to complete his last work—'Der getreue Ritter oder Sigismund Hager von und zu Altensteig und die Reformation, in Briefen an die Gräfin Julia von Oldofredi-Hager in Lemberg'—which was issued at Regensburg in 1852 with a preface by Aurel, his son, and has not yet, to our knowledge, found a translator.

So

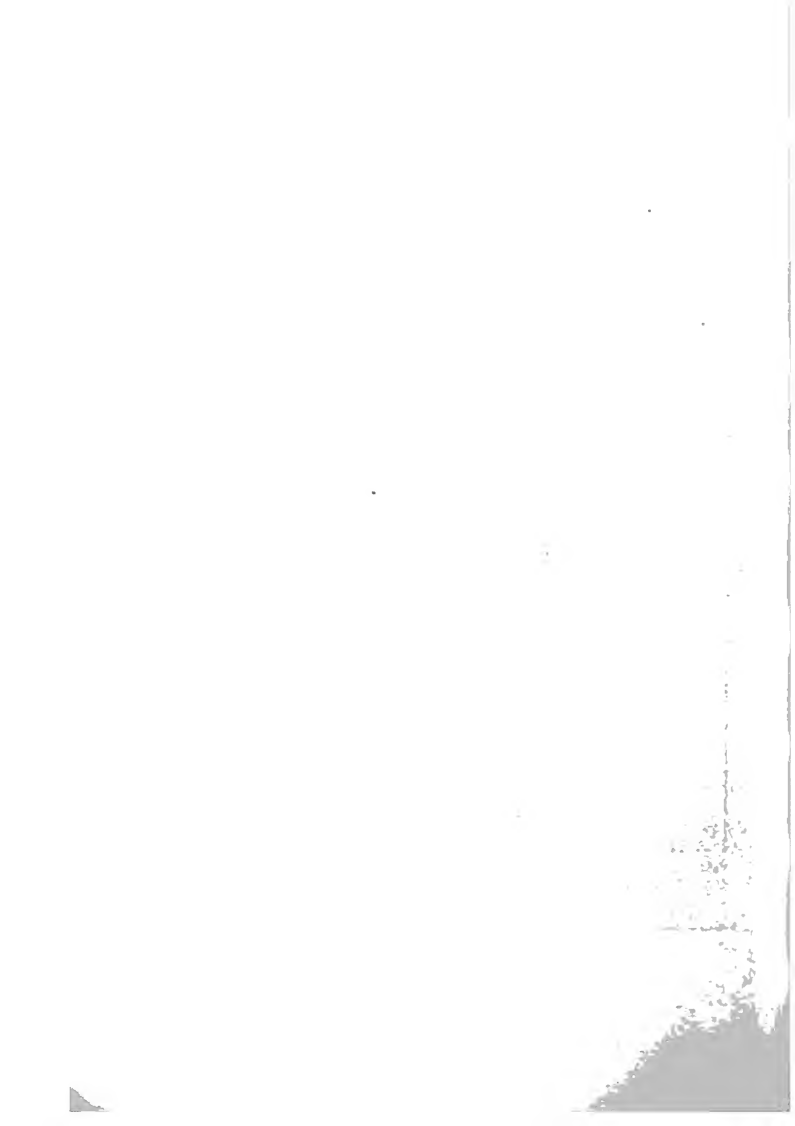
So much for the circumstances and the man. As to his two famous romances, it would be difficult to over-praise them; within their limits they are almost perfect; and of what work of art can more be said? The life of Maria Schweidler, the Amber Witch, is supposed to be told by her father—a kindly, cowardly, honest old creature, who writes the story of the providential escape of his beautiful, brave, and clever daughter from the fiendish malice of her enemies at the time of the Thirty Years' War. The plot is the simple scheme of an English melodrama (as Mr. Jacobs has noticed), where villainy uses occasions to drive an innocent heroine into dire stresses, till the lover, long delayed, manages to rescue her at the eleventh hour. It was, however, necessary that the plot should be simple and easy to grasp, when there is so much action in the detail. Appropriate setting, delicate touches of character, most skillfully enhance the nobility of the helpless innocent child, and draw the warmest sympathy from us for her unmerited suffering from the ignorance, envy, and lust of her persecutors, who urge her charity, her learning, and her courage against her as proofs of the horrid guilt of which they accuse her. The pretty episodes of the glorious Swedish king, and of the ring of Duke Philippos, the grim matter-of-fact narrative of the famine, are in Defoe's vein; but the serious, beautiful charm of the girl is somewhat beyond his range, though the method by which it is indicated is one of which the author of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* was a past master. It would be interesting to learn what knowledge of his famous predecessor Meinhold possessed; he must at least have read of 'poor Robin.' But the Pomeranian has qualities the Briton never possessed; Defoe's ghosts and spirits are vulgar, and he cannot deal with the supernatural so as to arouse horror or terror; he does not meddle save with sordid crime, which remains sordid under his hand. Meinhold has the true Elizabethan power of shocking the reader's soul with the repulsion and the sympathy he can arouse by his presentment of depths of sin and abysses of dread. And this without Tourneur's extravagance, without the mere sham and unreal taste for blood and bogeys that long haunted the childish Teutonic mind, and inspired the absurdities of the German romantic drama. This man is no Walpole with vapid, ill-begotten rococo invention; no Monk Lewis with crude, Surrey-side imaginings. He is of the true stock of Kyd and Webster and Shakespeare. He can mix you broad humour with horror, and banal incident with the most pitiful tragedy, so that the relief enables the catastrophe to tell the more surely and vividly.

Sidonia

Sidonia is far more ambitious, certainly in some respects finer than the *Amber Witch*, illustrating its author's rare qualities in fuller measure. Astonishing for breadth and power is the conception of *Sidonia* herself—the true adventuress nature—with her hatred for the pretences about her, proud of her own birth, and full of disdain for those below her, with eager greed and envy for all that was out of her reach, but had come to others without an effort, and armed in that selfish, revengeful cruelty and callousness for others' sufferings that belong to the habitual criminal, who urges pretended right to punish a society so constituted as to show symptoms of not existing mainly for his ease and comfort. There is something of *Becky* in her petty malignity, her indomitable courage, her elaborate and long-prepared schemes, her quick change of plan when it becomes obvious she is on the wrong track, her contempt for plain-dealing and honesty, which she accounts crass animal stupidity. Yet *Meinhold* rises far higher than *Thackeray* ever could; the little *Mayfair* tragedy shrinks beside the monstrous crime of *Saatzig*; even *Regan* or *Goneril* might have recoiled from ordering the merciless torment that *Sidonia* never scrupled to inflict. It is a feat to have imagined and put into being a creature so devilish and yet so human as the *Cloister Witch*. For such is *Meinhold's* marvellous skill that he forces us to pity her, and rejoice that *Diliana's* pleading won a painless death for the wretched old sinner who had suffered so terribly, both in soul and body, before the inevitable end came. *Dr. Theodorus Plönies* is a less pronounced figure than *Pastor Schweidler*, and this rightly, for the story he has to relate is twice as long as the *Caserow* cleric's, and the adventures of his incomparable heroine fill his canvas; but his dogged fidelity to the bestial hog-like brood of dukes that reign over *Pomerania*, and his infantile credulity, are distinctly marked. One recalls scene after scene of wonderful graphic force, ingeniously various in tone, but always lit with that spark of humour which alone could make so much horror endurable—the swift and unforeseen end of the mighty young standard-bearer on the ice; the aimless beery revolt of the town rascality; the squalid encounters on the boat by which the outraged father and the brutal paramour are brought to their deaths: the devout ending of young *Appelmann*; the boisterous horseplay of the castle, with death ever close at the heels of drunken idle mirth; the futile squabbles of the peasants and the hangman over the gipsy witch; the bear-hunt; the ridiculous fray with the treacherous malignant Jews, followed by the impressive

☛ SIDONIA AND OTTO VON BORK ON
THE WATERWAY TO STETTIN
a pen drawing
by
Reginald Savage





sive conjuration of the Angel of the Sun; the bits of half-comic, squalid convent-life; the haughty ceremonies of the feudal court; the cruel martyrdom of the innocent 'dairy-mother,' and the vulgar quarrels of the girls in the ducal harem. But wherever the unconquerable Sidonia comes on his scene the author rises to tragic heights, and his work grows in power and gains in colour. Admirably rendered is the mischievous fooling and insolent mockery of the wanton artful beauty who brings lust and hate and impiety in her train, withering all that is good wherever her influence spreads, so that, till accident foils her, she pulls the wires of the wooden-headed court-puppets, defies Her silly Grace and the honest chamberlain, and is blessed by the very victims she has bespelled. That midnight incident should surely find an illustrator where the brave-hearted maiden, cross in hand, has chased the werewolf out of the church into the churchyard, and lo! at the touch of the holy symbol, the foul beast has suddenly disappeared, and there stands Sidonia trembling, with black and bloody lips, in the clear thin moonlight beside an open grave. The climax of her career is reached with the coffin-dance, when the 'devil's harlot' sang the 109th Psalm, and took her revenge while the hymn was pealing through the church above, and the plank beneath her feet quivering with the death-agony of the girl-mother who had stood her friend in the midst of her disgrace when even her own kinsfolk had cast her off.

Nor is it possible to forget Sidonia, crouching in her wretched cell in the witches' tower, with the black scorched half-roasted head and cross-bones of her miserable accomplice flung on the floor beside her; Sidonia writhing and shrieking in impotent rage and agony on the rack at Oderburg; Sidonia, perhaps even more pitiful to remember, as she curses and blasphemes in her despair over her lost beauty and ruined life, when the court painter, Mathias Eller, brings the portrait of her youth to be completed by the likeness, at sixty years' interval, of her hideous senility. Sidonia, it is always Sidonia! She haunts the mind and shakes the imagination, long after one has laid down the book that has created her. She is complete; her awful life from childhood to age one unbroken tissue of impressive wickedness, with only the gleams of courage and wit and recklessness, and instinctive loathing for pretentious folly, to lighten its dark web. Once only is she repentant; for a brief moment she pities the child she has orphaned. But her end is a relief, when, not without the kind of dignity with which Dekker or Webster can bestow upon the foulest criminal, Meinhold's fearful

fearful heroine makes her last exit. 'At length the terrible sorceress herself appears in sight, accompanied by the school, chanting the death-psalm. She wore a white robe seamed with black [the death-shift that her worst sin had brought her]. She walked barefoot, and round her head a black fillet flowered with gold, beneath which her long white hair fluttered in the wind.' So she passes to her doom.

After which, most fit and congruous is the epilogue, wherein, with true Shakesperean craft, Meinhold soothes his readers' tense nerves with soft melancholy, and shows us the faithful servant by his master's coffin in the vaults of the castle-church of Stettin on the anniversary of his burial, with the paper bearing the record of that burial in his hand. 'But my poor old Pomeranian heart could bear no more; I placed the paper again in the coffin, and, while the tears poured from my eyes as I ascended the steps, these beautiful old verses came into my head, and I could not help reciting them aloud :—

'So must human pride and state
In the grave lie desolate.
He who wore the kingly crown
With the base worm lieth down,
Ermined robe and purple pall
Leaveth he at Death's weird call.

Fleeting, cheating, human life,
Souls are perilled in thy strife;
Yet the pomps in which we trust,
All must perish !—dust to dust.
God alone will ever be ;
Who serves Him reigns eternally.'

Has such weird tragedy been written in Europe since the Elizabethan stage was silenced by the Puritan, as this of *Sidonia*? When we compare it with Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*, the Frenchman's raw colouring is almost ludicrous, and his coarse conventional scene-painting ceases to impress. Scott's *diablerie* and magic is child's play, mere gossamer, beside Meinhold's firm, strong, natural work. Marryat has produced some coarse half-wrought effects; Barham and Stevenson have done well within restrained limits; Poe is too fantastic, for all his talent; Emily Brontë had the requisite power, but hardly attained to the exquisite art. Not Michelet with the splendid glow of his romantic effects, not Flaubert for all his rich and elaborate prose, not Huysmans with his artful chameleon embroidery of phrase and shrill neurotic narrative,

narrative, have been able to attain to Meinhold's marvellous creations. Only Balzac's *Succube*, 'ceste ange froissée par des meschans hommes'—a tale (like Maria Schweidler's) of pitiful charity brutally betrayed to torture and death,—this tiny masterpiece of a great master, is fit to stand beside them. It would seem that upon this German pastor of the nineteenth century there had descended the skirt of Marlowe's mantle. He who drew the pride of Tamerlane, the ambition of Faust, the greed of Barabbas, was the true ancestor of the creator of Sidonia, and we must go back to the time of Ford to find a right parallel among English men of letters to him that portrayed the meekly borne sufferings and soft courage of the Amber Witch.

F. YORK POWELL.

FOUR QUATRAINS

YE cannot cheat the Master of your fate !

Proclaim the goal to which your feet are set,

He who knows all is the Compassionate,

Often His wisdom prompts Him to forget.



WHY weep for days irrevocably dead,

For flaunting hopes in envious battle slain ?

The bravest soldier frankly looks ahead,

Knowing he dare not fight the past again.



TO-NIGHT old poets through the city go,

Doors shake and windows rattle at their tread,

The empty streets are noisy with the woe

Of sad immortals banished to the dead.



THE future lies before us rich with gold,

Only the foolish backward gaze and fret :

What laughter lurks in stories still untold,

What solemn songs await the singer yet !

PERCY HEMINGWAY.

INCURABLE

MIST hung gray along the river, and upon the fields. From the cottage, little and lonely, shone candlelight, that looked sad to the wanderer without in the autumnal dark: he turned and faced the fields, and the dim river. And the music, the triumphing music, the rich voices of the violin, came sounding down the garden from the cottage. His mood, his mind, were those of the Flemish poet, who murmurs in sighing verse:

*Et je suis dans la nuit. . . . Oh ! c'est si bon la nuit !
Ne rien faire . . . se taire . . . et bercer son ennui,
Au rythme agonisant de lointaine musique. . . .*

For this was the last evening of his life: he felt sure of that; and, foolish martyr to his own weakness that he was, he fell to meditating upon the sad scenery and circumstance of his death. The gray mist upon river and field, the acrid odours of autumn flowers in the garden, the solitariness of melancholy twilight, these were right and fitting: but there, in the cottage behind him, was his best friend, speaking with him through music, giving him his *Ave atque Vale* upon the violin. A choice incident! And instinctively he began to find phrases for it, plangent, mournful, suitable to the elegiac sonnet. True, his friend was not all that he could have wished: an excellent musician of common sense, well dressed and healthy, with nothing of Chopin about him, nothing of Paganini. But the sonnet need not mention the musician, only his music. So he looked at the dim river and the misty fields, and thought of long, alliterative, melancholy words. Immemorial, irrevocable, visionary, marmoreal. . . .

The *Lyceum* was responsible for this. That classic journal, reviewing his last book of verses, had told him that though he should vivisect his soul in public for evermore, he would find there nothing worth revealing, and nothing to compensate the spectators for their painful and pitying emotions. He had thought it a clumsy sarcasm, ponderous no less than rude: but he could not deny its truth. Tenderly opening his book, he lighted upon these lines:

Ah, day by swift malignant day,
Life vanishes in vanity:
Whilst I, life's phantom victim, play
The music of my misery.
Draw near, ah dear delaying Death!
Draw near, and silence my sad breath.

The

The lines touched him ; yet he could not think them a valuable utterance : nor did he discover much fine gold in his sonnet, which began :

Along each melancholy London street,
Beneath the heartless stars, the indifferent moon,
I walk with sorrow, and I know that soon
Despair and I will walk with friendly feet.

It was good, but Shakespeare and Keats, little as he could comprehend why, had done better. He sat in his Temple chambers, nursing these dreary cogitations, for many hours of an October day, until the musician came to interrupt him : and to the violinist the versifier confessed.

'I am just thirty,' he began, 'and quite useless. I have a good education, and a little money. I must do something : and poetry is what I want to do. I have published three volumes, and they are entirely futile. They are not even bad enough to be interesting. I have not written one verse that any one can remember. I have tried a great many styles, and I cannot write anything really good and fine in any one of them.' He turned over the leaves with a hasty and irritated hand. 'There, for instance ! This is an attempt at the sensuous love-lyric : listen !

Sometimes, in very joy of shame,
Our flesh becomes one living flame :
And she and I
Are no more separate, but the same.

Ardour and agony unite ;
Desire, delirium, delight :
And I and she
Faint in the fierce and fevered night.

Her body music is : and ah,
The accords of lute and viola,
When she and I
Play on live limbs love's opera !

It's a lie, of course : but even if it were true, could any one care to read it ? Then why should I want to write it ? And why can't I write better ? I know what imagination is, and poetry, and all the rest of it. I go on contemplating my own emotions, or inventing them, and nothing comes of it but this. And yet I'm not a perfect fool.' 'That,' said the musician, 'is true, though it is not your fault : but you soon will

will be, if you go on maundering like this by yourself. Come down to my cottage by the river, and invent a new profession.' And they went.

But the country is dangerous to persons of weak mind, who examine much the state of their emotions; they indulge there in delicious luxuries of introspection. The unhappy poet brooded upon his futility, with occasional desperate efforts to write something like the *Ode to Duty* or the *Scholar Gypsy*: dust and ashes! dust and ashes! Suddenly the horror of a long life spent in following the will-o'-the-wisp, or in questing for Sangrails and Eldorados, fell upon him: he refused to become an elderly mooncalf. The river haunted him with its facilities for death, and he regretted that there were no water-lilies on it: still, it was cold and swift and deep, overhung by alders, and edged by whispering reeds. Why not? He was of no use: if he went out to the colonies, or upon the stock exchange, he would continue to write quantities of average and uninteresting verse. It was his destiny: and the word pleased him. There was a certain distinction in having a destiny, and in defeating it by death. He had but a listless care for life, few ties that he would grieve to break, no prospects and ambitions within his reach. Upon this fourth evening, then, he went down to the end of the garden, and looked towards the river.

The sonnet was done at last, and he smiled to find himself admiring it. In all honesty, he fancied that death has inspired him well. He had read, surely he had read, worse sestets.

'I shall not hear what any morrow saith :
I only hear this my last twilight say
Cease thee from sighing and from bitter breath,
For all thy life with autumn mist is gray!
Dirged by loud music, down to silent death
I pass, and on the waters pass away.'

A pity that it should be lost: but to leave it upon the bank would be almost an affectation. Besides, there was pathos in dying with his best verses upon his lips: verses that only he and the twilight should hear. Night fell fast and very gloomy, with scarce a star. Leaning upon the gate, he tried to remember the names of modern poets who have killed themselves: Chatterton, Gérard de Nerval. They, at least, could write poetry, and their failure was not in art. Yet he could live his poetry, as Milton and Carlyle, he thought, had recommended: live it by dying, because he could not write it. 'What Cato did and Addison approved' had its poetical side: and no one without a passion for poetry

P

would

would die in despair at failure in it. The violin sent dancing into the night an exhilarating courtly measure of Rameau: 'The Dance of Death!' said the poet, and was promptly ashamed of so obvious and hackneyed a sentiment. At the same time, there was something strange and rare in drowning yourself by night to the dance-music of your unconscious friend.

The bitter smell of aster and chrysanthemum was heavy on the air; 'balms and rich spices for the sad year's death,' as he had once written: and he fancied, though he could not be sure, that he caught a bat's thin cry. The 'pathetic fallacy' was extremely strong upon him, and he pitied himself greatly. To die so futile and so young! A minor Hamlet with Ophelia's death! And at that, his mind turned to Shakespeare, and to a famous modern picture, and to the Lady of Shalott. He imagined himself floating down and down to some mystical mediæval city, its torchlights flashing across his white face. But for that, he should be dressed differently; in something Florentine perhaps: certainly not in a comfortable smoking-coat by a London tailor. And at that, he was reminded that a last cigarette would not be out of place: he lighted one, and presently fell to wondering whether he was mad or no. He thought not: he was sane enough to know that he would never write great poetry, and to die sooner than waste life in the misery of vain efforts. The last wreath of smoke gone upon the night, not without a comparison between the wreath and himself, he opened the garden gate, and walked gently down the little field, at the end of which ran the river. He went through the long grass, heavy with dew, looking up at the starless sky, and into the impenetrable darkness. Of a sudden, with the most vivid surprise of his life, he fell forward, with a flashing sensation of icy water bubbling round his face, blinding and choking him; of being swirled and carried along; of river weeds clinging round his head; of living in a series of glimpses and visions. Mechanically striking out across stream, he reached the bank, steadied and rested himself for an instant by the branch of an overhanging alder, then climbed ashore. There he lay and shivered; then, despite the cold, tingled with shame, and blushed; then laughed; lastly, got up and shouted. The shout rose discordantly above the musician's harmonies, and he heard some one call his name. 'It's that moon-struck poet of mine,' said he, and went down to the gate. 'Is that you?' he cried, 'and where are you?' And out of the darkness beyond came the confused and feeble answer—'I—fell into the river—and I'm—on the wrong side.' The practical man wasted

ARIADNE

by

G. F. Watts, R.A.





wasted no words, but made for the boathouse, where he kept his punt : and in a few minutes the shivering poet dimly descried his rescuer in mid-stream. The lumbering craft grounded, and the drowned man, with stiff and awkward movement, got himself on board. 'What do you mean,' said the musician, 'by making me play Charon on this ghostly river at such an hour?' 'I was—thinking of things,' said the poet, 'and it was pitch dark—and I fell in.' They landed ; and the dewy field, the autumnal garden, the rich night air, seemed to be mocking him. His teeth chattered, and he shook, and still he mumbled bits of verse. Said the musician, as they entered the little cottage : 'The first thing for you to do is to take off those things, and have hot drinks in bed, like Mr. Pickwick.' Said the doomed man, quaking like an aspen : 'Yes, but I must write out a sonnet first, before I forget it.' He did.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

BY THE SEA

THE mariners sleep by the sea.
 The wild wind comes up from the sea,
 It wails round the tower and it blows through the grasses,
 And it scatters the sand o'er the graves where it passes,
 And the salt and the scent of the sea.

The white waves beat up from the shore,
 They beat on the church by the shore,
 They rush round the gravestones aslant to the leeward,
 And the wall and the mariners' graves lying seaward,
 That are banked with the stones from the shore.

For the huge sea comes up in the storm,
 Like a beast from the lair of the storm,
 To claim with its ravenous leap, and to mingle
 The mariners' bones with the surf and the shingle
 That it rolls round the shore in the storm.

There is nothing beyond but the sky,
 But the sea and the slow-moving sky,
 Where a cloud from the grey lifts the gleam of its edges,
 Where the foam flashes white from the shouldering ridges,
 As they crowd on the uttermost sky.

The mariners sleep by the sea.
 Far away there's a shrine by the sea ;
 The pale women climb up the path to it slowly
 To pray to Our Lady of Storms ere they wholly
 Despair of their men from the sea.

The

The children at play on the sand,
Where once from the shell-broidered sand
They would watch for the sails coming in from far places,
Are forgetting the ships and forgetting the faces
Lying here, lying hid in the sand.

When at night there 's a seething of surf,
The grandames look out o'er the surf,
They reckon their dead and their long years of sadness,
And they shake their lean fists at the sea and its madness,
And curse the white fangs of the surf.

But the mariners sleep by the sea.
They hear not the sound of the sea,
Nor the hum from the church when the psalm is uplifted,
Nor the crying of birds that above them are drifted.
The mariners sleep by the sea.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

GROUPED STUDIES

Mildred.

Four various impulses do battle in the heart of Mildred—wage in that breast of hers their long, uncertain fight. A girl of her intelligence must crave, at times, for steady intellectual progress. It is natural that she should feel the fascination of present pleasure. All the best of her womanhood finds itself at peace in the consciousness of tender deeds. Blind instinct drives her to be fashionable. Charged with ideals so unstable, so many, and so much at variance, how can she quite succeed? May not life, so weighted, tend to be little else than an unwilling compromise—a concession, graceless after all, and finally barren?

The Basis of Friendship.

Heyburn's remark to me that 'a community of intellectual interests is the real basis for friendship,' has, of course, its truth; yet it shows too, to some extent, the limitations of the person who makes it—shows most of all the absence in him of imperious instinct or profound emotion. Friendly acquaintance, not real friendship, is that which is based, oftenest, on 'community of interests,' whether 'intellectual,'—the condition Heyburn, to do him justice, bargains for—or whether, on a lower level, merely material. On common intellectual interests, no doubt, some friendships are established; but with how many have they nothing to do! Instinctive liking, the discovery, either slow or immediate, that your temperaments understand one another, that your natures can fuse—this, more than anything you can define or intellectually justify, is the basis of associations in which affection must have a large, unstinted part.

A Living Sacrifice.

They sit, row after row—those common women penitents—in their own corner of the church, never looking to this side or that. There stay they, rarely lifting an eye—some of them pasty, some of them fresh coloured; all of them in their dull brown shawls and plain unribboned bonnets; their clothes, their ways, and most of their dull lives a continuous unsuccessful apology for the things of which (by some mistake of Providence) Humanity too much consists.

Patriot.

Patriot.

The man has been so desperately busy in merely getting his place, it would be unreasonable to expect that he should have had any time in which to make ready to fill it.

Lover.

I see—he likes resistance; and, though it would vex him in the end if the woman of his ideal should prove impregnable, it would disappoint him in the process did he discover that she was not strongly fortified.

Critic and Painter.

Yet, after all, is there a straw to choose between the two? For, though you know the painter to be indeed a blithe, degraded compound of ingratitude and vanity, the worst has not been said of his critic when you have called him—and have called him accurately—unsatisfactory and diffuse. He is much more than that. It is his destiny to quit the commonplace, only to arrive at the untrue.

Provence: Morning.

'La terrible lumière du Midi'—Barbey d'Aurevilly's phrase—gleams to-day at its fiercest, though it is early yet. From the eucalyptus that rises by the window, and all along the plain to the great sapphire water and the two islands, whitened gold, upon the far horizon, everything is positive, no detail unrevealed. The wind from the north-west—invisible but potent visitor—has swept and scoured the world, and, in white glare and throbbing heat, the shining land—a rapture of pure colour—burns itself away.

Provence: Evening.

The chain of mountains—the whole jagged Esterel, stretched to the sea—looks, from the place whence I behold it, a great peaked promontory; and, now the sun is down, the whole chain, flushed before with dusty gold, turns in an instant one chill, ghastly grey—like a sad woman's face on which there falls, quite suddenly, the shock of irretrievable, unlooked-for loss.

Q

Sufferers.

Commonplace folk air their kindness of heart by pitying profusely the incompetence of fools. Had Heaven granted them a wider vision, they would have some pity to spare for the capable, on whom fools wreak their mischief.

A Death.

She lay so quiet: stately almost, for it was not only still. On features wont to be changeful—responding quickly to the action of her mental life—the soul had thrown its last mould: the last of all its impulses had settled and stayed. An aspect of suffering, was it?—of sorrow, regret at the leaving? Scarcely. Yet much was abandoned. And she lay quiet—content, one must think, with the change.

FREDERICK WEDMORE.

THE SOUTH WIND

- I THE south wind rose at dusk of the winter day
 The warm breath of the western sea
 Circling wrapp'd the isle with his cloke of cloud,
 And it now reach'd even to me, at dusk of the day,
 And moan'd in the branches aloud :
 While here and there, in patches of dark space,
 A star shone forth from its heavenly place,
 As a spark that is borne in the smoky chase ;
 And, looking up, there fell on my face—
 Could it be drops of rain
 Soft as the wind, that fell on my face ?
 Gossamers light as threads of the summer dawn,
 Suck'd by the sun from midmost calms of the main,
 From groves of coral islands secretly drawn,
 O'er half the round of earth to be driven,
 Now to fall on my face
 In silky skeins spun from the mists of heaven.
- II Who art thou, in wind and darkness and soft rain
 Thyself that robest, that bendest in sighing pines
 To whisper thy truth ? that usest for signs
 A hurried glimpse of the moon, the glance of a star
 In the rifted sky ?
 Who art thou, that with thee I
 Woo and am wooed ?
 That, robing thyself in darkness and soft rain,
 Choolest my chosen solitude,
 Coming so far
 To tell thy secret again,
 As a mother her child, in her folding arm
 Of a winter night by a flickering fire,
 Telleth the same tale o'er and o'er
 With gentle voice, and I never tire,
 So imperceptibly changeth the charm,

As

As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower
 —Like as the stem that beareth the flower
 By trembling is knit to power :—
 Ah ! long ago
 In thy first rapture I renounced my lot,
 The vanity, the despondency, and the woe,
 And seeking thee to know
 Well was't for me ; and evermore
 I am thine, I know not what.

III For me thou seekest ever, me wondering a day
 In the eternal alternations, me
 Free for a stolen moment of chance
 To dream a beautiful dream
 In the everlasting dance
 Of speechless worlds, the unsearchable scheme,
 To me thou findest the way,
 Me and whomsoe'er
 I have found my dream to share
 Still with thy charm encircling ; even to-night
 To me and my love in darkness and soft rain
 Under the sighing pines thou comest again,
 And staying our speech with mystery of delight,
 Of the kiss that I give a wonder thou makest,
 And the kiss that I take thou takest.

R. B.

☛ PAOLO AND FRANCESCA
by
G. F. Watts, R.A.



ALFRIC



HERE were shouts that horribly clove the night air—the ring of axes on heavily smitten shields—every now and then a crash that meant a crushed head, and a cry that was not the full, defiant voice of onset but the stifled note of one who sinks earthward. And then Alfric saw that in a short while—a moment or two at most—he would be ringed round by the men whose ill-fame

had come swiftly from Northumberland—the torturers of King Ella. He had fought hard while his friends remained standing, and had seen them go down one after another, a fate which is good and honourable for every one, and which he himself would have chosen as his own, had choice been. But now, that for a breathing-space he stood over the body of the Dane he had cut down, he had a vision of the story that had come from the North, of Ella lying face downwards—alive—while his exulting foes opened his ribs into the form of a spread eagle . . . and then he swore mightily that never should these men have that triumph over him.

Swift was the thought, and instantly he hurled shield and bill at the oncoming assailant, smiting him backward ; then turned, with his knife between his teeth, fled like a hare to the water's edge, out of the fiery circle shed by the burning homestead ; then shot out into the black water and thick fenland mist, followed by all who dared, and they were very many.

With an instinctive cunning which is bred in the bone by such ravagous times, he turned the very instant he had come to the end of his long forward shoot, and dived sharply to his right hand, swimming under water as far as his breath would hold out. He did this as one who had lived an amphibious life ever since his birth, and who was not afraid of any strange things that might be sleeping in the depths he threaded, who wished to get away from his fellow-men who had burnt his home, cut his friends to pieces, and intended in all likelihood a disgraceful end for himself.

And as he twisted and kicked his feet out of the water with the dive, as a duck turns up its tail, there came what he had forethought—a sleet of arrows pelting fast, cutting the water with a sharp 'phit-phit,' along the oily wake he had left behind, and far out beyond it into the darkness.

darkness. So very prompt had the Northmen been with their bows, and so very nearly had they guessed his exact whereabouts, that one of these messengers of the Raven stuck quivering into the sole of his upturned foot as he went down, and five or six more clove the place where his head had been an instant previously. He felt the sting in his heel and snorted angrily at it, trailing behind him and wagging its point about in his wound as he swam on in the depths; soon, doubling together for a second, he plucked it out of the leather shoe that had stayed the steel from inflicting a serious hurt, and stuck it in his girdle for further use; then feeling his pent-up breath becoming a painful weight at his heart, he rose and swam stealthily as an otter, holding little more than his nose above the surface, with a pang of wrath at his losses, and exultation at his escape.

Not one of those who had entered after him could he see.

So he swam on and on, thinking of nothing but speed and silence, for he knew they would row over a wide surface if they could find the boat betimes—still, it was well hidden. The mist was heavy on the face of the great mere, he could hardly see a hand's-breadth before him, but from behind he heard faint whooping and yelling, and a splash of oars that died gradually as he slid along. So they had found that boat, and were exploring. They were prompt indeed, but his trick had succeeded, evidently; they were on the wrong track. Therefore he took his knife from his teeth and placed it in his girdle, as being no longer needed for instant use, then raised his head out of the water and settled down to a swinging stroke that could be kept up for a very long while.

Once he brushed against some great soft mass that quivered suddenly, and swished away in a hurry; once as he skirted a thicket of deep-growing rushes, where of old an island had been, some writhing thing began softly to twine round his leg, and instantly he drew back his limb with a swift twist, and darted off at full speed. After a long interval of strokes that seemed to bring him nowhere, he slid quietly into a group of some great waterfowl, sleeping with their huge bills on their backs. One or two awoke, and brandished these formidable things as a man will wave a broad blade, but quickly he sank below the surface, and there was no cry of surprise from them. Perhaps they thought him only a floating corpse—such a sight being too common to arouse appetite in birds who had supped well—anyhow, he rose beyond them, and renewed his course into the unknown without

out their betraying his whereabouts to any who might yet be after him.

Into the Unknown.

For he had quite lost his bearings, and could only hope he had not taken some unnoticed turn and was not going back to the ravaged shore. . . . The submerged islet he seemed to know, but even that indicated the edge of a region whither he had never extended his fishing journeys—a place of water—water, and little else, on whose farther side the moon arose at this time of the year; a place said to be haunted by a Grendel, which had so far met with no Beowulf to destroy it . . . and as he thought of these things, lo! his fenland eye felt a slightly lesser darkness over against his face, and he knew, as no dweller inland could have known, that the moon was there, and that he was indeed swimming out into the region of Fear.

Yet little he cared for Grendel in his present mood of fury against those he had eluded; to meet the Marsh Demon in all his dreadfulness of clutching arms and serpent head would be but the honourable end of a warrior: as he swam he growled in fierce grief to think of the spread eagle which, perhaps, was even then being inflicted on some wounded friend. Visions of return at the head of a troop, and the sweet word Revenge, danced about in his head, until the hopelessness of them trailed its chilling certainty across all such rosy dreams. The fever of fighting was being cooled by the autumn water, and he fancied every now and then that henceforth he must be a dweller among strange faces, content if he could keep unharmed. So suddenly came this spasm of cold upon him, that he felt as if some weight were pressing his shoulders and trying to drown him . . . Grendel, perhaps! stealthily arisen behind . . . ?

Sturdily he plucked his knife from his girdle and twisted round with all the force of his body. No! there was no claw on his back, no Grendel with eyes like torches, as the tale went. It was all fancy; he was still alone on the face of the deep mere, with nothing visible above or around, just as if he were hung in the middle of the sky. However, that vigorous twist had sent his blood stirring up and down him; he pushed the knife again into his girdle, and forward once more with the long, steady stroke, keeping on towards the feeble greyness, which he felt rather than saw, in that one spot of the thick fen mist. How long he thus persevered he could not tell—hours, it seemed.

Until something black arose before him, came close, and looked into

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his

his face. It was very large, its big eyes were mild and wondering, also it had a pair of tusks, and moustaches long and sweeping-white, like the lip-clothing of some barrow-ghost that once had been a king of the northern seas. Whether it were man, or beast, or Grendel, it gazed awhile at Alfric as he hung there in the water with a beating heart, overshadowing him with its bulk. Then, instead of attacking him, it went again on its way, uncertainly, as one that is far from home and lost, with a gentle groan, so that Alfric felt a sorrow for it which he could not understand, but which might be of his own thought that he also had lost his kinsfolk: and he knew that it was no Grendel, whatever else it might be.

After which, the chill of the water came creeping into all his bones and weighed upon him as before, until he kicked and twisted smartly, recovering his strength with difficulty for the task of going onward to a place he did not know. Once or twice he felt a sudden anger at all his swimming being so apparently vain, and beat the water furiously, lying on his side as a ship does when the wind blows strongly abeam, cleaving the cold surface with a great rush and bubbling; but at last he had to pause, and turn over to float and get a little rest, feeling in those intervals as if the slightest hair-weight more would send him down to the bottom like a stone, without his being able to move a finger.

But then he would recover from staring up into the grey nothingness aloft, struggle round on his face, and toil on, though now it was as if he were pulling himself with difficulty through a vast heap of wet wool, so spent did he know himself to be after the fight and the long swimming.

And still he came to nothing—nothing at all; still the everlasting grey mist; still he hung poised, to all seeming, in a sky with nothing all round him, though the end was below if he were to hold up his hands and take no breath.

Then he felt a mortal weariness of moving, and wondered why he so persisted in the strife for what he did not know, when all he cared for were lying with cloven skulls on the far sandbank. Straight at that thought he held up his arms, and sank like a stone. . . .

All at once, as the water covered his descending head, his foot touched soft mud. He might have stayed there to drown, but the feel of earth in those depths stirred in him a fresh desire of life; and a beat of his hand, weak though it was, brought him again to the surface.

And now, as once more he painfully drew in his arms and put them forth

forth through the entangling water, he saw a great reed standing sentinel in front, causing the life-longing to glow red within him. Soon he reached it, and was aware of many others behind—huge stems, with purple tassels high over him. Never before had he seen such giants, standing like a water-forest, drooping their sword-like blades. He grasped one, and it cut his softened flesh, but he was very glad, and catching at each stem helped himself on into shallower water. So at last he wound his way through them into a swamp, lying flat on his back to keep from the sucking mud, and slowly dragging himself along. Thus he came to lumps of earth on which grew grass, over which he crawled, sinking a little at times, until it was firmer under him, and the soil appeared dry between the rushes, which here were small and low. And then he tried to stand upright, but fell again with a sting in his heel and lay there exhausted, at last to sleep heavily. . . .

The daylight filled his eyes as he awoke. There was a hand upon his shoulder, lightly pressing—the hand of a woman. Wonderingly he gazed up at the tall figure of a maiden dressed in some grass-woven garment, a cross dangling from her breast, her hair hanging down to her waist, and waving over him like a golden veil as she stooped to look at his face. Her blue eyes showed the good Saxon blood; she was very beautiful to see, much as the angels the priests had discoursed of when he was in the land of living men. 'It is Saint Alchfrida,' murmured he.

'Who are you?' she asked. 'Whence come you?'

'I was Alfric, son of Beortric, till I came to my end in the deep water. The Danes broke in upon us, and I slew my man, maybe more. Nor were they able to take me, O Saint. Have I not done rightly?'

'Indeed I know not,' she said, wondering also and with pity.

Then she vanished, as it seemed, and he slept.

But again he awoke, and she stood there once more, with a white-headed man by her side, dressed in an old grey cassock. 'Canst rise, stranger, and come with us?' said this figure; 'or is thy body too weak for one more trial? It is but a little way.'

At that Alfric arose with difficulty, and went with the pair as one in a dream, over the grass and through a reedway, until he came to a cleared space where stood a hut, on whose roof was a rude cross of osier, of which material the dwelling also was made.

He now knew that he was alive, and that these were of his race, living here unknown and unmolested.

They

They gave him food and water, and made him rest all that day on a couch of leaves in the corner, whence at times as he lay he saw the maiden passing to and fro. And once, when his eyes were nearly closed, so that one might think he slept, she came and stood at the door with hands pensively clasped, watching him with a face full of pity, until he looked up, when she withdrew to some labour in the border of the clearing.

After a while, as evening came on, she entered and prepared the meal, and he spoke to her to hear her voice, the sound of which was low and peaceful as a morning breeze between the green waterways. She asked him of his home, and he told her; but his place was not known to her, nor was his name, nor that of any of his kin, nor anything that he knew. So, too, in her turn she could tell him nothing, save that she had always been here since the Day of Flame, as she called it, and had no desire to go elsewhere than where her father was.

These things Alfric heard gladly, because of the sweetness of her voice, though it made him think for a while of his homestead and of other good things lost. Then as his heart came back to peace from that thought, and he watched her placing food in the bowls, the old man entered and greeted him Christianly, turning next to bless the board.

'Tell me, Father,' said Alfric, 'is there any truth in what men say of the Grendel that haunts these fens?'

'I know not, my son,' replied the priest. 'The Lord allows strange things to be, and so that may be of them. I have been here for twenty years with this child of a murdered kinsman. Only we two escaped, and our Lord brought us safely here, where we abide gladly, secure as I trust. Indeed, I had heard of the terrible Grendel, and had I not been in fear of life for Christiana and myself, might have feared the Thing that men said was in this place. But in despair I came, deeming that the Marsh Demon could not be more cruel to us than the Danes, and have not seen him through all these years; wherefore I believe that he lets us be, or is not.'

'It is very peaceful to be here,' said Alfric regretfully; 'indeed I would fain stay always, if it were not that my kinsfolk's blood cries for avenging at my hand.'

'Yet God is great, and full of purpose. Why shouldst thou go, my son? To kill many foes will not avail to make thy kinsfolk live.'

'That is true,' said Alfric musingly, with his eyes on the face of Christiana.

So

So the days passed over the isle in the haunted fen where the fugitive had found refuge, and as he laboured for the old man of failing strength and the daughter of his adoption, a peace settled upon his heart as new bark grows over the gashed tree; sometimes also, when he spoke to her alone, the thirst for revenge so abated that he almost felt content to leave it in the hands of God.

But these were seldom, and at last came an unrest that gave him trouble. One day he entered the little hut which he had built for himself, and sat long in thought, now that he understood what ailed him—so deep and so full of doubt it was that he forgot to go to the midday meal with his hosts. Therefore at last a shadow fell over his face—two shadows; the pair were standing before him in his own hut, and the radiance of Christiana's hair seemed to fill its dusk as the light of a torch. 'What ails thee, friend Alfric?' asked the priest.

'I will speak plain words,' said Alfric huskily as he rose, 'yet I am full of more than words can carry forth. I see thy face, Christiana, wherever I go, though thou be not at hand; it is an angel's face always, as first I saw it, and yet it is now so dear to me that it gives me a pain I never felt before. This I have held down with my hand for many days; but now my hand and my breast are too small for it, and knowing that it is love for thee . . . I will say it and then go to the place of danger and of strange men, leaving thee at peace as thou shouldst be. For I know also full well of myself that I am not worthy to be a mate of thine, being rough and blood-stained. Farewell, kind friends!'

He held out his two hands and hung his head.

The priest took them, while Christiana stood apart with fingers clasped and bent face. 'Nay,' said he, 'this is a strange thought. Canst thou not forget the ills that are past, and wouldst thou seek again the dangers that have allowed thee to escape? The times over there are very evil.'

'True,' said Alfric, 'but I am of them, not of you, and I would not bring them here to those that have befriended me; and for all I desire I cannot keep wild thoughts out of me. The wolf cannot live with the deer. She is too tender a flower for my rough grasp. Let me go, Father.'

'Yet if she would teach thee ways of peace, thinkest thou she could, my son?'

'Ay, . . . ay, indeed. I would be as patient a scholar as a man can be. I would do . . . what would I not? . . . But how can that be?'

be? Let me go, Father, for I cannot forget my slain kinsmen. Farewell!'

'Nay, let her speak first. Speak, dear daughter!'

Then the girl raised her face, and met the young man's disturbed eyes with a look so frank and kind that the vision of blood faded from his heart. 'No, do not leave us, Alfric!' she said.

So Alfric stayed; and the priest joined their hands, and the lesson of happiness lasted for many pleasant hidden years in the isle none dared approach because of the evil repute it had.

At Yuletide feasts and other gatherings, when the night drew on and the mists took weird shapes, men told tales of the fiend that haunted the water and entered halls in mid-dark and snatched away the bravest, tearing them to pieces as he went—a monster with eyes of flame and dragon claws. And all believed and shuddered and repeated these things . . . while Alfric and Christiana sat hand in hand over their lesson in the twilight.

W. DELAPLAINE SCULL.

80 THE ALBATROSS (ANCIENT MARINER)

a pen drawing

by

Reginald Savage



FLORENTINE RAPPRESENTAZIONI AND THEIR PICTURES



BETWEEN the twelfth and the sixteenth century nearly every country in Europe possessed some sort of a religious drama, which in many cases has lingered on, nearly or quite, to the present day. Even in England—in Yorkshire, in Dorset and Sussex, and perhaps in other counties—the old Christmas play of St. George and the Dragon is not quite extinct, though in its latter days its action has been rendered chaotic by the introduction of King George III., Admiral Nelson, and other national heroes, whose relation to either the Knight or the Dragon is a little

difficult to follow. The stage directions, which are fairly numerous in most of the old plays which have been preserved, enable us to picture to ourselves the successive stages of their development with considerable minuteness. In some churches the 'sepulchre' is still preserved to which, in the earliest liturgical dramas, the choristers advanced, in the guise of the three Maries, to act over again the scene on the first Easter-day; while of that other scene, when at Christmas the shepherds brought their simple offerings, a cap, a nutting stick, or a bob of cherries, to the Holy Child, a trace still exists in the representation, either by a transparency or a model, of the manger of Bethlehem, still common in Roman Catholic churches, and not unknown in some English ones. When the scene of the plays was removed from the inside of the church to the churchyard, we hear of the crowds who desecrated the graves in their eagerness to see the performance; and later still, when the craft-guilds had burdened themselves with the expenses of their preparation, we have curious descriptions of the waggons upon which each scene of the great cycles 'of matter from the beginning of the world to the Day of Judgement,' was set up, in order that scene after scene might be rolled before the spectators at the street corners or the market place, throughout the length of a midsummer day. Artists with an antiquarian turn have endeavoured to picture

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for us these curious stages. In Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries* there is a frontispiece giving an imaginary view of a performance; and only a few years ago an article was published in an American magazine, with really delightful illustrations, depicting the working of the elaborate stage machinery behind the scenes, as well as the effects with which the spectators were regaled. But of contemporary illustrations the lack remains grievous and irreparable. In England we have nothing at all for the Miracle Plays, while for the moralities by which they were superseded, the only manuscript illustration is a picture of the castle in the *Castle of Perseverance*, in which, with the aid of his good angels, its occupant, Man, was set to resist the attacks of the deadly sins and all the hosts of hell! The later moralities, printed by Wynkyn de Worde and his contemporaries early in the sixteenth century, have occasionally a few figures on the face or back of the title-page, to which labels bearing the names of the characters are attached. But these were venerable cuts, which had done duty on previous occasions for other subjects; and so far from being specially designed to represent the players on an English stage, were really French in their origin, and only imported into England from the old stock of Antoine Vérard.

In France we have much the same tale. It is true that so many of the old French Mysteries still remain in manuscript, unexplored, that there is a possibility of some pleasant surprise in store for us. But the printed plays were either not illustrated at all, or sent forth with only a handful of conventional cuts, some of which, as we have seen, soon afterwards found their way to our own country. One little ray of light, however, we have in the pictures, especially of the Annunciation to the Shepherds and their Adoration, in many of the numerous editions of the *Hours of the Blessed Virgin* (the lay-folk's prayer-books, as they have been called, of those days), which, from 1490 onwards, attained the same popularity in print which they had previously enjoyed in manuscript. In these illustrations we see the shepherds, with their women-folk about them, as they watched their flocks, till startled by the angel's greeting, and again crowding round the manger at Bethlehem. In one edition they even bear on labels the names Gobin le gai, le beau Roger, Mahault, Aloris, etc., by which they were known in the plays.

But however ready we may be to trace the influence of the miracle plays in these pictures, as illustrations of the plays themselves they are very

Operetta di frate Sirolamo da ferrara della oratione mentale



very inadequate ; and the fact remains that in only one country, and practically only in one city in that country (for the Sienna editions are merely reprints) did the religious plays, which in one form or another were then being acted all over Europe, receive any contemporary illustration. This one city was Florence ; and alike for the special form in which the religious drama was there de-

veloped, for the causes which contributed to its popularity at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and for its close connection with the popular art of the day, the subject is one of considerable interest. On its literary and religious side, the late John Addington Symonds discussed it in *Studies of the Italian Renaissance* with his usual ability, and many of the plays have been reprinted by Signor Ancona. Of late years the little pictures by which they are illustrated have also received attention, a fact amply attested by the extraordinary rise in their market value. But it is worth while to bring together, even if only in outline, the pictures and the plays to which they belong, more closely than has hitherto been attempted, and this is my object in the present paper.

Book-illustration in Italy began very early with the publication in 1467, by Ulric Hahn, at Rome, of an edition of the *Meditations* of Cardinal



Cardinal Torquemada on the Life and Passion of Christ. For the next twenty years its progress was only sporadic, and though we find illustrations of greater or less artistic value in books printed at Naples, Rome, Ferrara, Verona and Venice, we can only group them together in

twos and threes; there is absolutely no trace of any school of illustrators. From this sporadic growth Florence was not entirely excluded, for besides a treatise on geography we find in the 1477 edition of Bettini's *Monte Santo di Dio*, and the famous 1480 *Dante*, pictures of very considerable interest. They differ, however, from those of the illustrated books of other Italian towns, in being cut not on wood but on copper, and it is a remarkable fact that until the year 1490 no Florentine book is known which contains a cut. The signs of wear in a woodcut of the dead Christ which appears early in that year, has given rise to a belief that there may have been some previous illustrated edition, now lost; but it is more probable that the picture had only been printed separately for pasting into books of devotion. In any case, it stands apart, with but one other cut, slightly later in date, from all other Florentine work, and



and must be looked on only as an example of the sporadic illustrations of which we have spoken as appearing in other districts. But from the 28th of September, 1490, onwards for twenty years, we have a succession of woodcuts which, amid all the differences which give them individuality, are yet closely linked together in style, and which form, on the whole, by far the finest series of book-illustrations of early date. The

popularity which these woodcuts attained is attested by the repeated editions of the works in which they appear; while the suddenness with which they sprang up, the general similarity of style, and the nature of the books they illustrate, all suggest that we have here to deal with a conscious and carefully directed movement as opposed to the haphazard use of illustrations in other cities during the previous twenty years. The book in which the first characteristic Florentine woodcut appears is an edition of the *Laudi* of Jacopone da Todi, printed by Francesco Buonaccorsi; and both the choice of the book and the name of the printer offer a tempting basis for theory-making. Printing, we must remember, though it had been in use for more than a third of a century, was even then a new craft, and was still taken up sometimes as a side-employment by many persons who had been bred to other trades or professions. Our own Caxton, as we all know, was a mercer; the first printer at St. Albans, a schoolmaster; Francesco Tuppo, of Naples, a jurist; Joannes Philippus de Lignamine, of Rome, a physician; and so on. In natural

natural continuation, however, of the work of the Scriptorium in many monasteries, we find that a large number of the early printers were members of monasteries or priests, and it was to this latter order that the Buonaccorsi who printed the *Laudi* belonged. Now, the name Buonaccorsi is the name of the family of Savonarola's mother. A few months before the appearance of the *Laudi* the great Dominican had been recalled to Florence by Lorenzo de' Medici, and his first public sermon there—a sermon which had stirred the whole city to its depths—had been preached on the previous 1st of August. In

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the next year we find Buonaccorsi printing the first edition of the *Libro della vita viduale*, the earliest dated Savonarola tract of which I know; and I have not been able to resist hazarding the conjecture that between the preacher-monk and the priest-printer there may have been some tie of blood, and that it was to Savonarola that the splendid series of Florentine illustrated books owed their origin.

That this should be the case would not be surprising. Savonarola was no Puritan, or rather he was like the Puritans of the better sort, and loved art so long as it was subservient to the main object of man's being. The pamphlets with which he flooded Florence during the next few years are, for the most part, decorated with a cut on their first page or

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or title; and if the subject were ever worked out, it would probably be found that this was uniformly the case with the original editions, and those issued with the author's supervision; while the unillustrated copies are mere reprints, which the absence of any law of copyright made it possible for any printer, who thought it worth his while, to issue, with or without the author's leave. The woodcuts to the Savonarola tracts number from forty to sixty, according as we include or reject variants on the same subject, and fall naturally into three divisions, illustrating respectively the Passion of Christ, the duties of Prayer and Preparation for Death, and various aspects of Savonarola's activity, in which, however, the representations of him are always imaginary, never drawn from life. As an example of these cuts, I give that which decorates the title-page of an undated edition (*circa* 1495) of the *Operetta della oratione mentale*. I have had occasion to use this before in my little work on *Early Illustrated Books*, but there is a certain largeness of pictorial effect about it which gives this cut, I think, quite the first place in the series, and makes me unwilling to take any other as an example. The cuts in the *Rappresentazioni* are seldom quite as good as this, but they form a parallel series to those of the Savonarola tracts, occasionally borrowing an illustration from those on the Passion of Christ, and evidently inspired by the same aims. The same types (our only means of fixing the printers of these dateless little books), were used in many of the works of both the series, and it does not seem fanciful to believe that Savonarola, either directly or through some trusted disciple, was nearly as intimately connected with the one as he undoubtedly was with the other.

We have said that the choice of the work in which appeared the first typical Florentine woodcut was not without interest for our subject. Jacopone da Todi, whom the cut exhibits kneeling in an ecstasy of prayer before a vision of the Blessed Virgin, was a Franciscan mystic, eccentric to the verge of madness in his manners, but a spiritual poet of no mean ability, and the reputed author of the *Stabat Mater*. He died in 1306, and was probably old enough to have remembered that strange epidemic of the *Battuti*, when thousands of frenzied men and women marched from city to city, scourging themselves almost to death for the sinfulness of the world, till their career had to be stopped by the free use of the gallows. When the frenzy was past, those who survived it formed themselves into companies for the continuance of their religious exercises in a more moderate form, and from their meet-
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THE SEA NYMPH
by
Sir Edward Burne Jones

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ing together to sing their *Laudi*, hymns of a peculiarly personal fervour, in the chapels of their guilds, they obtained the name *Laudesi*. Of the writers of these *Laudi*, Jacopone da Todi was the greatest, and it was out of the *Laudi* that the later *Rappresentazioni* were gradually developed. In his excellent account of the *Rappresentazioni*, to which I have already alluded, Mr. J. A. Symonds seems to me to have laid rather undue stress on the manner in which this development took place, as offering a contrast to the history of the religious drama in other countries. It

is true that in England the plays which have come down to us belong almost exclusively to the great cycles which unrolled the history of man from the creation till the crack of doom, but we have mention of several plays on the lives of the Saints—e.g. one on St. George and the Dragon, and another (which survives) on St. Mary Magdalene, and the popularity at one time of these Miracle Plays, properly so called, is witnessed by the fact that it is their name under which the cycles of Scriptural dramas generally passed. At Florence these longer dramas were not wholly unknown, but they seem to have been acted only in pantomime or dumb-show, in the great pageants on St. John's Day; the shorter plays developing from the *Laudi* just as, at an earlier period, the liturgical dramas had developed in France and England out of the dramatic recital of the gospel of the day. It is worth noting, by the way, that the *Laudi* themselves were not superseded, but continued to be written and sung when the *Rappresentazioni* were already becoming popular.

popular. Two of the writers of them during this period have a special interest for us—Maffeo Belcari, as the author also of the earliest printed *Rappresentazioni*, and Girolamo Benivieni, as the friend and disciple of Savonarola, whose doctrine and prophecies he defended in 1476 in a tract, printed, this also, by Buonaccorsi.

In an edition of the *Laudi* of the first of these two writers, seen by Mr. Symonds, but which I am unlucky enough never to have come across, there is an interesting cut representing the *Laudesi*, standing before a crucifix, singing their praise. In course of time dramatic divisions had been admitted into the *Laudi*, and under the name of *Divozioni* they were recited with appropriate action in dialogue form. The actors were for the most part boys, who were formed into confraternities, while the expenses of the plays were doubtless defrayed by their parents. As the dramatic element in the performances became more decided, the plays came at last to be generally termed *Rappresentazioni*, and under this name they attained a great popularity during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and the first of its successor.

Unlike the northern Miracle Plays, which are almost without exception anonymous, the majority of the earliest *Rappresentazioni* which have come down to us contain the names of their authors, and in editions separated by half a century the text remains substantially unaltered. In English plays the text often appears to have grown up by a process of accretion, so that a cycle, or even a single play, in the form in which it has survived, could hardly with justice be assigned to a single author, even if we knew the name of the first writer concerned in it. The difference is not unimportant, and is one of numerous small signs which tell us that the religious drama in Florence, at least in this stage of its development, was less popular, less spontaneous, than in our own country, and more the result of deliberate religious effort.

The earliest *Rappresentazione* printed was the *Abraham* of the Maffeo, or Feo, Belcari, whom we have already mentioned. It was printed in 1485, the year after Belcari's death at a good old age (he was born in 1410), so that the whole of Belcari's plays were published posthumously. Among them are plays on the Annunciation, on St. John the Baptist visited by Christ in the Desert, and on St. Panuntius. Of the last two of these I have seen fifteenth-century editions—the one at the British Museum, the other at the Bodleian Library, each with a single charming woodcut. No less a person than Lorenzo de' Medici was the author of the play of *S. Giovanni e S. Paolo*, which has also come down to us

in



in its original edition with a graceful cut; and Bernardo Pulci, who died in the first year of the sixteenth century, produced a play on the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat. But the most prolific of these dramatists seems to have been a woman, Bernardo's wife Antonia, to whose pen we owe plays on the Patriarch Joseph, the Prodigal Son, S. Francis of Assisi, S. Domitilla, S. Guglielma, etc. The names of a few other writers are known; but there were also numerous anonymous plays, written very much on the same lines, to some of which we shall have to allude.

Almost invariably the plays begin with a Prologue spoken by an Angel, who is represented in the title-cut of Lorenzo de' Medici's *San Giovanni e San Paolo* as standing behind the two saints in a kind of pulpit. In other early plays the Angel is represented in a separate woodcut whose lower border is cut off, so as to fix on to the border of the special title-cut of the play. Later on, another design was substituted for this, without any border at all. I think it probable that these angelic prologuings were mostly spoken from some machine at the back of the stage, especially contrived for celestial appearances. In other respects, the services of the stage-carpenter do not seem to have been much called for. The plays were acted, we are told, either in the chapel of the guild or confraternity, or in the refectory of a convent, and the arrangements were probably very similar to those in modern school-plays, the imagination of the spectators being often required to take the place of a change of scene. In the so-called 'Coventry' Plays we hear of a device by which a new scene, or perhaps rather a new centrepiece, with the actors all in their places, could be wheeled round to the front; but more often the whole of the *dramatis personæ* were grouped at the back or sides, and individual actors merely stepped forward when their turn came. In the play of *San Lorenzo* we are expressly told that two scenes were shown simultaneously on different parts of the stage, Decius and his satellites offering their heathen sacrifices on the one side, while Pope Sixtus comforts the faithful against the coming persecution on the other. This combination of two scenes in one is a familiar feature in mediæval art, and is not unknown even in these Florentine woodcuts, small as they are: witness our fourth cut, in which the bartering at the pawnshop, and the indignities offered to the sacred wafer, tell the story of the play by means of its two most prominent scenes.

Of the literary value of the *Rappresentazioni* it is not possible to speak

speak with much enthusiasm. From a literary standpoint, indeed, the lives of the Saints, with which most of them have to do, are a difficult and not very promising subject. Most stories of heroism are best told in ten lines at longest; and to attempt to spin them out into several hundred, without any considerable material in the way of authentic detail, leads inevitably to weakness and exaggeration. In this respect the *Rappresentazioni* are neither much worse nor much better than the average *Legenda Sanctorum* in verse or prose. They follow these, in fact, with remarkable fidelity, and as they are written for the most part

IX



in the familiar *octava rima*, it is only by the speeches being made in the first person, instead of in historical narration, that they differ very greatly from them. Thus, to take the plays from which we have chosen our illustrations, that of S. Francis of Assisi, by Antonia Pulci, faithfully records all the main incidents as told in the legends—the colloquy with the beggar during which he was stricken with compunction, the theft from his father of money to repair a church, the founding of his Order, the conference with the Pope, and the reception of the stigmata; this last being, as might be expected, the subject chosen by the artist for the woodcut on the title. The play of *S. Lorenzo* shows us the martyrdom of Pope Sixtus in the Decian persecution, and then the torture and

death

death of S. Laurence for his refusal to surrender the treasure which the Pope had bequeathed to the poor of the church. Both of the woodcuts to these two plays are of great beauty. The first probably follows the traditions of the many pictures on the subject rather than that of the stage, though it was, no doubt, for a scene like this that the stage-managers of the day used their utmost resources. In the martyrdom of S. Laurence, on the other hand, we may be sure that we have a very exact picture of the scene as played on some convent stage.

Both these plays belong to the fifteenth century, and, as is mostly the case in the earliest editions, have only a rough woodcut each. This was not invariably so, as in the Bodleian Library there are copies of editions of the plays of *Stella* and *S. Paulino*, which have every appearance of having been printed before 1500, but yet have sets of several cuts, all obviously designed especially for them. These, however, are exceptions; and as a rule where we find several cuts, it is easy to trace most of them back, either to other plays, or to other illustrated books of the time, such as the *Epistole e Evangelii*, the *Fior di Virtù*, Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, etc. Thus, of the two cuts given here as illustrations to the curious *Rappresentatione duno miracolo del corpo di Christo*, the first alone occurs in the fifteenth-century edition, while in that of 1555 (probably sixty years later) this original cut reappears, with three others added to it. The first, here shown, representing a drinking scene, is borrowed, I strongly suspect, from the *Morgante Maggiore*; while the second, which shows a man being burnt, and the third, in which a king is consulting his council, may be called stock-pictures, and reappear with frequency.

This play of the *Corpo di Christo* is an Italian version of a miracle which was constantly being reported during the middle-ages, and was often the excuse for a cruel persecution of the Jews. The well-known 'Croxtton' *Play of the Sacrament* is cast on the same lines, and a detailed comparison of the two would yield some points of interest. In the *Rappresentazione* the story is well told, and with unusual vivacity. After the angelic prologue there is an induction, in which a miracle of a consecrated wafer, dripping blood, is announced to Pope Urban, who discourses on it with a cardinal and with S. Thomas Aquinas and S. Bonaventura. The play then begins with a drinking scene, in which a wicked Guglielmo squanders his money, and then takes his wife's cloak to the Jewish pawnshop to get more. The poor woman goes herself to the Jew to try to get her cloak back, and is then persuaded to
filch

filch a wafer at mass and bring it to the Jew, on his promise to restore her garment. Her horror at his proposal is overcome by the pretext that his object is to use the Host as a charm to heal his sick son, and that if this succeeds he and all his family will become Christians. This, of course, is a mere fiction, but it serves the woman in good stead; for when the Jew is discovered by the unquenchable flow of blood from the wafer he maltreats, he is promptly burnt, while the Judge is warned by a



special revelation to spare the life of his accomplice, whose guilt might easily be represented as the greater of the two.

An edition of the play of *S. Cecilia*, probably printed about 1560, affords a good example of the gradual addition of cuts in later reprints. This little tract of about twenty pages has no less than eighteen pictures in it, three of which, however, are only repetitions of one of the most familiar cuts in the whole series of *Rappresentazioni*—a Christian virgin dragged before a king; while three other well-worn cuts are each repeated twice, so that the number of blocks used was only thirteen, though these yielded eighteen impressions. As might be expected, the little pictures are often dragged in with very little appropriateness. Thus, the Roman soldiers sent to arrest Cecilia gave the publisher an excuse to show a party of knights riding in the country, and so on. On the other hand, the little picture here shown of a disputation, though undoubtedly executed in the first instance for some other work, probably

U

gives

gives us a very correct representation of the costume and grouping of the actors, and the same may be said of the companion picture from the play of *S. Orsola*.

One point in the text of the *S. Cecilia* deserves noting. In the main it resembles very closely indeed the legend as it is known to lovers of English poetry from the version which Chaucer made in his early days and afterwards inserted, with little revision, into the *Canterbury Tales*. But when Cecilia has gone through the form of marriage with the husband who is forced upon her, and is proceeding with him to his home, the lads of the neighbourhood bar their passage with a demand for petty gifts, to which the virgin submits with good grace—a fragment of Florentine life thus cropping up amid the rather unreal atmosphere of the old legend.

Whatever the shortcomings of the *Rappresentazioni*, their popularity was very great, and they were reprinted again and again throughout the sixteenth century. Naturally the woodcuts suffered from continual use, and the stock-subjects, like that of a general martyrdom shown in cut 8, are often found in the later editions with their little frames or borders almost knocked to pieces. Recutting was also frequent, and in the same edition of the play of *S. Mary Magdalene*, from which, for the sake of the unusual freedom in the handling, I have taken the title-cut as one of our illustrations, it is repeated later on from a new block, clumsily cut in imitation of the old one.

As the *Rappresentazioni* and their illustrations are connected with the Savonarola tracts on the one hand, so on the other we find them influencing some less dramatic forms of literature. Thus, among the early Florentine illustrated books we find a number of *Contrasti*—the contrast of men and women, of the living and the dead, of riches and poverty, etc. These were rather poems than plays, but the name *Rappresentazione* is sometimes applied to them in later editions. This is so, for instance, with the famous *Contrasto di Carnesciale e la Quaresima*, from which the first of the two cuts is here given, the second representing a visit to the fish and vegetable market for Lenten fare when the days of Carnival are over. Again we find the same methods of illustration applied to the *Giostre* of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, the story of Orpheus, by Angelo Politiano, which forms part of the former, being adorned with no less than ten admirable woodcuts, of which the picture here reproduced, of Orpheus frightened by a fury from attempting a second time to visit Hell in quest of his lost Eurydice, is quite

quite one of the finest. The same methods of illustration were also used in the *novelle* and other secular chapbooks, which have nothing either religious or dramatic about them. It is clear, however, that the religious use was the earlier of the two, and that while the writers of the *Laudi* anticipated the practice of later revivalists in adapting profane songs and tunes into hymns of devotion, it was the secular literature which was the borrower in the matter of illustrations.

As to the authors of these charming woodcuts, we know absolutely nothing. Dr. Paul Kristeller has lately attempted to trace out three or four distinctive schools of style in them, but no name of any artist can be connected with them; and we can only conjecture that there were one or two special workshops in Florence where they were designed and executed, and that printers and publishers applied to these workshops when they were in need of cuts.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.



T H E O X

THE holy night that Christ was born
 The ox stood reverently apart,
 Both ruminating eaten corn,
 And pondering within his heart.

There be (he pondered) certain beasts,
 Which stand about Jehovah's throne,
 Which hearken to the Lord's behests,
 Which have no thought but Him alone.

Now I am surely one of these.
 And, since He comes to my abode,
 'Tis fitting I should bow my knees
 Before the Holy Child of God.

I hold it for a solemn troth
 I shall no more be sacrificed.
 For when to prophethood He groweth,
 I cease to symbolise the Christ,

Who is the noble Holocaust
 As anciently Himself did plan
 Himself to be the Holy Host,
 To feed and succour fallen man.

I cannot tell the Mother dear
 My joy ; but softly if I low,
 The noble Infant Christ will hear
 His bullock praise him. He will know.

JOHN GRAY.

50 PERSEUS AND MEDUSA
by
Sir Edward Burne Jones



EQUAL LOVE

By MICHAEL FIELD

CHARACTERS

JUSTINIAN	.	.	Emperor of the East and West
THEODORA	.	.	His Empress
ZUHAIR	.	.	An Arab Boy
ANTONIA ¹	.	.	Wife of Belisarius, attending on Theodora
PHOCAS	.	.	Keeper of the Prisons

A MAGE

GUARDS and ATTENDANTS

SCENE—A private apartment of the royal palace, Byzantium.

It is surrounded by golden columns, from which purple curtains are hung, drawn back so as to discover the walls of the apartment that are inlaid with mosaics of formal blossoming shrubs on a golden ground. To the right, there is a door leading to the Empress's bedchamber; to the left, a little private door. The narrow aisle, running between the walls and columns, is continued in front of a row of windows at the back: they command a view of Byzantium and the Straits. Oriental Arabesques cover the ceiling; the floor is paved with green marble. In front, at the extreme right, a bronze statue of Ariadne Sleeping is placed opposite a bronze Saint Chrysostom, with gilded mouth, that stands on the left. A little table of silver and pearl in the middle of the room supports an incense-burner; near it stretches a throne-like couch, resting on peacocks, wrought in precious stones. A cradle, covered with a pall, has been placed toward the farther end of the room, close to another table on which are flowers and leaves.

ANTONIA [*as she binds a wreath*] The child is dead,
Justinian's sickly daughter—it is well.
The mother never kissed it, though sometimes
She would steal in, and ask me with sharp looks
If it were grown: it should have been a boy!
But she is timorous and pitiful
Beside it; and I fear to let her see
How small it looks and pinched, now it is dead.
The charge was irksome to me; but a mistress
Like Theodora must not be denied.

¹ The real name of this woman was Antonina.

[Enter THEODORA]

THEODORA Is the child still asleep?

ANTONIA [*moving between Theodora and the cradle*] You must not look.

THEODORA Why are the doors ajar?

Why is the room so chill? Why have you put

The food away? And you are binding flowers!

Give me the violet wreath. [*She goes towards the cradle with wreath, stops, turns back, and tosses it to Antonia*].

No; take it, girl,

I cannot look on death.

ANTONIA Be comforted.

It was a babe almost to put away,

Ill-shapen and a girl; the emperor scarcely

Had cared to own such issue.

THEODORA It was *mine*!

The little sighing breath, and the soft head

Against my breast. You think the courtesan

Still lives on in the mother?

ANTONIA No, the pride

Of a great empress: you had quickly hidden

My feeble nursling within convent walls.

I would not be a girl, born of your blood,

Denied your freedom—there is such a force

Of nature in you. It died quietly,

Without a struggle.

THEODORA Is there no more hope,

Antonia, is there no more hope for me?

The midwife said—you put your hand across

Her mouth; but, oh, I heard it as a curse—

She said I should not bear a child to live.

If that be so——

ANTONIA But once, there is a rumour

That once you bore a son.

THEODORA A living son;

Ay, ay, a living son. And what is this?

A masque, an effigy, an alien,

That gives no answer to the quivering

Wild cries and ecstasies within my flesh,

That disenchants me.

ANTONIA You will soon forget.

THEODORA Those grips, those wanton fondlings?

ANTONIA In a while,

When you are more yourself.

THEODORA Yes, but the fever

So clings about me.

ANTONIA When the milk is gone

You will grow tranquil. You have evil dreams;

Last night you woke me, talking in your sleep.

THEODORA Talking!—Of what?

ANTONIA That night before the games. . . .

You raved and bit the sheets.

THEODORA Oh, I remember!

I must indeed be sick, so to be haunted

By those tremendous days of revelry

In the arena.

ANTONIA Come, those days were good

As any days in youth. Why be ashamed

To speak of them? We had so many lovers,

We did not stay to choose.

Sweet Cyprian, now,

When I beheld you, fragrant from the bath,

On the low bed you love, shaded by plumes

Of jewelled peacocks, with pearl-braided linen,

And that dull mantle sewn with golden bees,

I picture to myself how I have seen you,

After some signal triumph at the games,

Wiping the sweat from forehead and from lips,

To give and take fresh kisses. Mother Ida,

Those were the days that smacked of very life;

We may not hope to mend them.

THEODORA I have never

Dreamed of that past till just two months ago,

After my baby's birth. I hear the cries

Of ribaldry, the stillness, the applause,

The leaps of laughter. You must hear these dreams;

I cannot keep them to myself. . . . Zuhair!—

ANTONIA You speak of him?

THEODORA Yes, in the dream.

ANTONIA

The wretch

Who turned you out of doors?

THEODORA

Oh, how I hate him!

Hate, hate! I have been hating all my life

The lovers——

ANTONIA

Who rejected you?

THEODORA

Not those;

All who enjoyed my favours, hating them,
 Wishing them ill. But do you say Zuhair,
 That Eastern youth I met in Africa,
 Abandoned me? He drove me from his house
 In a mad pang of jealousy. My child
 Remained with him. You say, a living son:
 But, doubtless, he has perished—how my breasts
 Ache with the milk!—for they would let him starve
 When I was driven forth.

The dream begins:

I was half-dead with hunger, and the night
 Was drawing on; it was a desert place,
 Lonely as Egypt in its solitudes,
 When suddenly there came a cry; I heard—
 I lying there in Africa—my name
 Borne on in triumph by a shouting crowd.
 Oh, it was breath of life to me! I woke
 So chill and lonely. . . . And my babe is dead!
 Give me the violet crown.

The eyes were dark—

Do you remember?

ANTONIA

Theodora, fair,

Fair as your own.

THEODORA

Then I have quite forgotten. . . .

A little thing of yesterday, a rose

How sweet!

ANTONIA

Oh, fie! you will forget its sweetness;

The past is nothing.

THEODORA

While the summer lasts:

Oh, nothing, nothing! How I loved the child!

[*Looking up with a strange illumination on her face*]

My daughter! Ay, the perfect Theodora,

Born in the purple : there had been romance
 To me in everything she did or said,
 Saw or enjoyed. You see this little cap
 Studded with jewels, so I had it stitched,
 Pearl crushing pearl, to take revenge on fate
 For all the misery thrust on my pride
 When first I found my body beautiful,
 My raiment poor and vile. Antonia, once—
 How children suffer!—I was in such rags
 I crept to a lone garden, where great boughs
 Of yellow roses glittered on a wall,
 And stript myself, and wreathed them in such garlands
 Round waist, and neck, and shoulders, that my breasts
 Took the light shadows of the leaves. The perfume,
 The splendour!

ANTONIA But it was not poverty
 Caused you the pain ; I rather think a power
 Wrought in you, craving for expansion, such
 A power as gives a man by miracle
 Grip over hostile kingdoms. I remember
 The day I saw you first, an orphan child,
 Sent with your sister Comito to beg
 For bread in the arena. Both the factions—
 At least, the hated faction of the *Greens*—
 Broke into laughter at the little maids.
 Comito wept, and hid her face ; but you
 Said you would entertain the crowd, and after,
 Ask for their coins. You cleared a little space,
 Then, saying when your father kept the beasts
 That you had learnt their antics, set to gambol
 Like the young lions, gave the languid sprawl
 Of dozing tigers, and the jackal's laugh ;
 Or grew into a serpent, one of those
 With eyes so dead they draw you close to them
 To see if they be very death indeed.
 And then . . .

THEODORA Yes, then the *Blues* broke in acclaim,
 Poured coin on me ; I called to Comito
 To pick it up, but I pressed to their midst

That I was free to plunge into and live,
Cut from me in an instant.

[Enter JUSTINIAN]

JUSTINIAN Theodora!

THEODORA [*standing between him and the cradle*]

Hush, do not look beyond, the babe is dead.

JUSTINIAN [*formally blessing the child*]

My child, my daughter. [*To THEODORA*] Dearest!

THEODORA No; you seem

Dead like the child; you cannot comfort me.

I have grown jealous, lonely; a new passion

Has crept into my nature.

JUSTINIAN All the city

Will mourn with us.

THEODORA Pshaw! If Byzantium mourn

In any wise—what should a city care

Save for its own prosperity!—but if

It can conceive of anything beyond,

It mourns that you, wedding a courtesan,

Ay, so you treat me, I am that to you,

If you imagine me incapable

Of plumbing my own misery; it mourns

That I, your empress, who by day and night,

Brood on your hopes, conceive your policy,

Maiming your enemies, and binding fast

The nations of your rule, am now the means

Of drawing your great empire to its close.

JUSTINIAN You do these things, you are the deity

Bringing these things to pass: our laws will live,

Men will obey them.

THEODORA Is it possible

That can content you? And you do not think

How soon when we are dead——

JUSTINIAN [*enfolding her*] Think of the future?

And you are here, the future!

THEODORA Emperors wed,

To found great empires.

JUSTINIAN And I wedded you

Not even to be great, though I had ruled,

Save for the joy you bring me and the force,
 With faltering ambition ; wedded you,
 To found a rapture in my life, a glory,
 To travel with the sun. You speak of children,
 Of gifts—

THEODORA I do. How righteously your mother
 Opposed our marriage, and foretold this doom
 Of sickly offspring, or the barren curse.
 My majesty is gone.

JUSTINIAN Your majesty
 Is in my worship, in our constant love.
 Theodora, let us speak of those first days
 We met each other, not as virgin souls,
 As weary, cynical.

THEODORA You speak of them ?
 I will not let you speak. My youth is buried
 Entire, as in an instant, by a shock
 Of earthquake a whole city in the gulf.
 I have no past. Justinian, it becomes

[looking wildly at the cradle, and then out towards the sea]

Almost necessity I should look out,
 On to the future.

JUSTINIAN Talk to me of love,
 Our love ; while that endures there is no time
 Save for the terror that to-day should end.
 Augusta !

THEODORA Oh, that name !

JUSTINIAN We met in God :
 The day is precious to me as to saint
 The day of his conversion. From a troop
 Of libertines, who boasted of your love,
 I heard praise of your beauty, and I came
 Coldly to take my pleasure.

When I saw you
 I wept, and bowed my head.

THEODORA How tremulous
 The air grew ! There was passing of a wind
 That moved like fire between us, and I cried

90 DEATH AND THE BATHER
after a pen drawing
by
Laurence Housman



Go from me! As you passed, my soul rose up
Strong as a fiend to follow you.

JUSTINIAN That look !

THEODORA My women found me senseless on the floor ;
And when at last the light flowed back on me,
I watched it resting on the vulgar walls,
The vulgar statues, on the tapestries,
With all their jaded colour, on my flesh—
Oh, you are pitiless ! I turned and fled
From my polluted house.

JUSTINIAN To find that cell,
A holy hermit's cell, half ruinous . . .

THEODORA Where I took refuge.

JUSTINIAN Where my life began.

THEODORA It was without the city. I could see
The ring of sombre verdure, the deep curve
Of palaces and temples : when the lights
Flashed out, the torch processions, ay, even then,
I looked on to the sea, and in my heart
I said, except he find me, there I find
The grave and fathomless oblivion.
Oh, I had quickly died—

JUSTINIAN As I, beloved,
If my mad quest had failed.

THEODORA These weary hours
Of fasting, diligence, and solitude !
I bought great bales of wool, I learnt to spin :
At eventide, when my appointed task
Was done, I looked forth on the glittering domes
And tried to pray.

As Danae in her tower
I prayed, I was shut up.—Deliverer!

JUSTINIAN That hermit's cell! Love, we will build a church
Above the sacred spot where I was guided
By Him who guides the stars, where solemnly
I took you for my wife, planting in you
My hope, my honour, drawing from your love
The peace man draws when he is told of God
He is become His servant.

Y

THEODORA Give me more,
More of this miracle!

JUSTINIAN One joy remained
In store for me—to make you fellow-ruler
With me of half the world. As one who builds
A temple of rich stones, and in the magic
Of strange new lights and perfumes pours his prayer,
I, through the purple and the diadem
It is my glory to invest you with,
Find in my faith fresh splendour, further scope
For adoration.

THEODORA [*lying back*] You have given me pleasure :
Dressed delicately, sleeping the long sleeps
I love, in sunny leisure by the sea
Idling my hours away—

JUSTINIAN But vigilant
Each instant for my welfare.

THEODORA What! no more
Than that scant praise, no more than vigilant?
And I have cleansed my love each day as gold
Is cleansed. Oh, you are dull!

JUSTINIAN To apprehend
All you have suffered?

THEODORA All that you enjoy.
Mine is a convert's strength: most converts fall
Into strange lapses; I have never lapsed.

JUSTINIAN Never. What ails you now?

THEODORA Antonia, take
The child and bury it. . . . There! How your wish
Is my most living will.

[*Attendants are summoned, and carry out the
body of the child followed by ANTONIA*]

JUSTINIAN [*looking at THEODORA with an expression of intense pride*]
You cannot fail.

I am as sure of you as in campaign
Of Belisarius; but this victory
Won in my sight—

THEODORA Beloved!

Had bruised, had even pricked him with their spears.
His cheek was bleeding.

THEODORA And that frightened you—
You cannot look on blood.

ANTONIA He did not hear
Their angry shouts, but from between my hands
Stared up intently in my face, then smiled.
'No, you are not the Empress; you must promise
To give me sight of her.'

JUSTINIAN The lad is crazed.
Have him removed.

ANTONIA [*appealing to* THEODORA] But yet to quiet him—
And I have promised.

JUSTINIAN You had other charge—
With spices to prepare for burial—

THEODORA Enough! Antonia, I will see the lad.

[*Exit* ANTONIA]

What need of all this violence? I have quelled
The angriest street tumult as I passed
By just an instant drawing back my veil.
Leave us, Justinian; you are grown impatient.
Those laws! I will be with you in an hour.
We left off at a knotty point concerning
The marriage-contract. There must be more freedom
For women, as I urged. You will return
And lock me in your study?

JUSTINIAN In an hour.

THEODORA I almost wish I had gone back with him
To the dear common life where, with our books
And thoughts and love—yes, with our very whims
And spites and jealousies, we were so happy.
There is no occupation in the world
That is not ours. What wars we fight! In those
I am the general. He is architect
Of St. Sophia from the base to dome.
And in theology—the heresies
I make alluring. But the laws, the laws!
Those mornings that I cannot wake my soul
When he arouses his, what narrow edicts

Are made, what cautious limitations set !
 And then my inroad and the burst of light. . .
 I will not be a fool and let mere nature
 Hold me in slavery.

[ANTONIA *returns with the boy*]

THEODORA You kiss my feet ;
 You force your way to me. You have some courage !
 [*Eyeing him more closely*]
 Or are you clinging to me for protection ?
 I cannot give protection. If your crime
 Offend the state, or if you have intruded
 Into my palace to fulfil some vow
 And boast that you have touched an Empress' robe,
 You shall live long—I will not take your life—
 Beneath those chambers where my prisons stretch.
 Now, answer me ! [*To ANTONIA*] He does not even listen—
 Not hear, me—he is mad.

ANTONIA It is your beauty
 Holds him in awe : be patient.

THEODORA [*trying not to meet the boy's eyes*]

He is mad.

Young children sometimes utter prophecies,
 And sometimes they are sent with words of doom
 Their innocence makes awful. Take him off !
 I am too weak to bear this. [*To the boy*] What ! you shed
 Free tears, you let them trickle down your cheek,
 Taking no shame to hide them ? Are you wronged ?
 I can be gentle. If you are an orphan—

ANTONIA He sobs !

THEODORA Believe me, half those tears are false ;
 The shame hurts and the hunger. Have him fed.

ANTONIA Speak, child !

ZUHAIR I cannot.

THEODORA [*as if in the past*] But some eyes were kind
 That day I begged ; and some one praised my hair—
 Rich silky hair like his. [*Stooping over the child and taking his chin*]
 You are an orphan ?

Come, now—your story ?

ZUHAIR

I have none.

THEODORA

Then why—?

[*Suddenly softening*] Child, you are welcome!

ZUHAIR Ah, at last I hear

The golden voice! Far off in Araby
 I heard its praise. I was a lonely lad,
 Ill-used, neglected; when I joined in talk
 With other boys, I found they were ambitious
 To dive for pearls, to see the pyramids,
 To conquer Italy. I only thought
 Of seeing you. What mystery of rose
 Flushes across your cheek!

THEODORA

You do not mark

My gems, my palace.

ZUHAIR

For I did not hear,

O Empress, of Byzantium; I heard
 Of a sweet woman with a silver laugh,
 Like Venus' laughter.

THEODORA

Who should speak of this?

ZUHAIR A stranger who had seen you at the games

Long years ago. It seemed so wonderful
 That he had heard your laughter. A free girl,
 He said, you stood and simply shook your sides
 With laughter and the whole world echoed it:
 But afterward, when each man had returned
 Into his house, the music came again
 And rippled down his memory. No flute—
 And yet it was not that so much—

O Empress!

THEODORA What is it? Let me look at you? You come,
 You say, on some great errand.

ZUHAIR

Pity me;

I have no lying words. Give me some comfort,
 Some strength, as if I were your very son.
 I have no mother: I have stood and watched
 How mothers kiss their sons, stood by the tent
 And sobbed and turned away.

THEODORA

I have no son;

But if I had—now tell me all the rest.

Yes, you may put your arms quite round my neck
And sit beside me.

ZUHAIR When my father died,
He drew me to him and he said such things
Down in my ear, I could not understand ;
If he were raving—

 You unloose your clasp !

Oh then, I dare not speak.

THEODORA [*rising*] Why should I care
What any madman says? You are my son ;
We do not need a slave in evidence :
This silky hair, and all this mystery
Of rose that flushes, fades across the cheek !
You are my son. Is this the news you bring
Touching the Emperor's honour?

ZUHAIR I am yours,
Your child, O mother !

 [*Re-enter JUSTINIAN*]

THEODORA And I give you up.

 [*She violently flings ZUHAIR from her and addresses JUSTINIAN*]

I have unbosomed him, an innocent
Conspirator who comes to claim our throne
Because I am his mother. It is true ;
I am his mother.

ZUHAIR But it is not true
That I am come to ask for anything
That is not mine of right. You loved the Empress
Before she was the Empress ; so I love her,
So I would fight for her, so die to serve her ;
My life is in her hands.

JUSTINIAN It is well said.
The Empress shall determine if your life
Is for her honour and our empire's peace.
Theodora, you are judge of this.

THEODORA How judge ?
I do not judge, I cannot. You, like God,
Can put my past away.

50 A ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE
after a water-colour drawing
by
Charles H. Shannon



ZUHAIR [*flushing*] To fight, to earn my death
On the wide plains a free man!

JUSTINIAN [*to THEODORA*] Excellent!
Acutely reasoned. From my sombre wars
I should return to find Byzantium
Ablaze in celebration of some slight
Advantage won on Transylvanian hills
Over the Gepidae; or, worse, be met
By Theodora abject in petition
I should adopt her son.

THEODORA You injure me.

JUSTINIAN Then learn the simple truth: one absent look,
One glance of roving interest in your eyes,
If once I should surprise it, were enough . . .

THEODORA Yes; I have failed to act my part but once,
Once in my life. I cannot be forgiven:
I know the custom—hoot me from the stage,
Heap shame upon me!

JUSTINIAN Still you speak of shame,
You who have brought me in estate more low
Than if I had been drawn on through the streets
Of my own city by a jeering crowd.

THEODORA Oh, if you wake my hatred, I am back
In the arena! I have seen such things,
As once—a tigress with one paw across
Her last, unravished cub. Ah, there indeed
Was majesty! [*Throwing her arms round ZUHAIR*]

 And I can mimic fools,
Who threaten and do nothing. I could make
Byzantium laugh by just presenting you
Judicial and so lofty. [*To ZUHAIR*]

 Trust to me.

[*As she continues, JUSTINIAN stands rigid with clenched hands,
then turns his back on her and walks through the corridor
with a beckoning gesture. In a few moments he returns
with his guards*]

THEODORA I hate to see you standing there and making
No motion for your life. You do not know
You have a power—the Emperor standing there

With his fixed eyes and sullen, vacant face,
 Cannot conceive. Oh, you were safe with me,
 If you would try your arts. Ask for your life,
 I prompt you—ask!

ZUHAIR [*in a low voice*] I do not wish to live:

If I might choose the manner of my death—

THEODORA A boon! Why, so!—Gods, anything! [*He whispers in her ear*]

My child!

[*Her manner suddenly loses its elasticity, and she says mechanically*]

Remove him, guards; let him be kept in prison,
 The deepest prison, where the jailer feels
 About to find his captive, gropes and gropes
 And murders in a blindness.

ANTONIA [*throwing herself before JUSTINIAN*]

Never, never!

Rather despatch him quickly. Oh, my lord!
 My mistress is still weak, delirious,
 Full of repining that her babe is dead.

THEODORA What babe? His babe? I had forgotten it—

JUSTINIAN [*pointing to the guard, and addressing THEODORA*]

They wait for your command.

THEODORA [*taking the boy by the shoulders and advancing towards the guards*]

Remove him, guards!

But, if a hair of his be harmed—

[*Passing her hand over the boy's body, and speaking to him in a low, excited voice*]

You mean—

You dare this?

ZUHAIR Oh, be great!

THEODORA With my own hands?

They tingle—what, to handle you myself!

[*The boy is borne off: she looks after him, a covetous frenzy in her face*]

O Mother Ida! I am shaken through
 As by the clash of cymbals!

Ecstasy!

Ay, so to mutilate myself. [*Suddenly, in a loud voice, to ANTONIA*]

Oh, see

That he is safe ; he is my only hope,

The apple of my eye.

[Exit ANTONIA

JUSTINIAN [*rising*] So you have chosen.

THEODORA Chosen !

Oh, kill me, kill me, make an end !

I can do nothing.

JUSTINIAN Then we are divorced.

THEODORA Impossible ! Divorced ? That shall not be,

That were annihilation. You may kill

And bear me as a thorn about your heart,

Long as you live ; I have no fear of death :

But if you dis-espouse me, have you thought

How I must perish ? There will be grey hell

About me everywhere. And you—divorced !

JUSTINIAN I shall go forth to solitary rule.

THEODORA Forgetting me ?

JUSTINIAN No : for my shame is branded—

Cursing the day we met, razing the churches

You built, the convents for the prostitutes

You thought to cleanse ; destroying in my empire

And home each record of you.

THEODORA [*wringing her hands*] But what more

Could I have done ?

JUSTINIAN Is there no more to do ?

THEODORA Kill me—I fail you.

JUSTINIAN No, you do not fail,

You bring my life to failure—I break up.

I cannot kill you. It has been mirage,

This dream of mine. I thought you were a gift

As veritable and as fresh from God

As Eve herself.

THEODORA [*crouching close to JUSTINIAN*] You thought—say everything

Before we are divorced : to punish me,

Say all.

JUSTINIAN I will. I thought you were a woman

So tempered, so acute she wove the visions

For unborn eyes to see ; a woman swift

As an archangel to dis sever truth

From heresy, miraculously guided

In her intelligence, and of a beauty
 Thrilling the air as a dove's holy wings—
 A woman chosen to present to men,
 Mysteriously, an image of the Church
 Christ waits to greet in Paradise.

[THEODORA rises, holding his hand, and absorbed by his words]

All this

I dared to think.

THEODORA [*retaining his hands and kissing them*]

Would you but give me time—

Justinian, I am weak, you leave me free?

If you believed that I could do this thing,

It would be so much easier. [*Bowing her head on his arm*]

God, divorced!

[*Looking up*] Promise, you never will abandon me;

Never, if I should fail.

JUSTINIAN I cannot pardon;

There is such justice in me.

THEODORA That is well;

For now I do not doubt that I shall live

Through all this day and on through many years,

Live, by your side, your Empress. [*To Attendants*] Bid them bring

The boy back to my presence. [*To JUSTINIAN*] Do not touch me:

'Tis I myself; you cannot give me help—

JUSTINIAN No help; I shall not even pray for you,

As if I feared you would not do this thing

You will not fail, you cannot.

Theodora,

How great I am in you!

THEODORA Lay me some weapon

For use, beside the throne.

[*Re-enter ANTONIA with ZUHAIR*]

What! they have bound him!

Trust me, you shall not see his face again!

But leave us.

JUSTINIAN As I leave you with the crowds

Of courtiers who adore you: you are free

And in your freedom the security

You will not fail, you cannot; my worst foe

Dare not assail my honour.

[JUSTINIAN *lays his sword by the throne and goes out*]

THEODORA [*turning toward ZUHAIR, and beckoning him to approach*]

O my boy,

How your eyes follow me! Is this the welcome

After so long a journey? Do the chains

Gall these young wrists? How soft you are to touch,

How sweet! Do you rebel?

ZUHAIR Strike off these bonds.

I will not let you fawn upon a slave.

THEODORA No: as a lioness her netted cubs.

I fondle you and you are helpless. There! [*Loosing his chains*]

Now you can give me free caresses, cling

Close, close. You thought I should have azure eyes?

And mine, you see, are grey. I cannot move you :

What shall I do with you in all the world?

Why, I might banish you, Arabia—

The sun itself basks there. Will you return?

ZUHAIR Arabia!

THEODORA Does it seem a thousand years

Back in your life? You sigh so wearily:

So much has happened since the morning sun.

ZUHAIR So much must happen.

THEODORA I have lost a child.

And my wide realms are left without an heir

If_____

Yet I were a fool to banish you ;

For, if I let you go, this blood of mine

Would never filter through the arid plains

And lose itself. The kingdoms would grow dark

One day about my borders with the pressure

Of alien tribes and a usurper's sword.

[Perceiving the passion in ZUHAIR'S face]

What, part with you! put you away! Your name—

I mean the name before you were a prince ;

You shall be re-baptized.

ZUHAIR Then you must choose

My name, you are my mother ; and to-day

My life begins. I have not lived before.

THEODORA Can you feel that?

Antonia, take the boy,
Give him rich clothing and that brodered cap
Starry with sapphires.

ANTONIA That I begged of you
In vain.

THEODORA Well, he may wear it.

[*Exeunt ZUHAIR with ANTONIA*]

Why, he has
My very soul—can take new dignities
As easily as I. He must not come
In his young royalties to dazzle me,
Or I shall hail him THEODORUS—give him
To one of our great generals to train
Into a soldier.

[*Going to a secret door and calling*] Phocas!

[*He enters stealthily*]

Are the prisons

Quite empty?

PHOCAS Madam, there are still a few
Sick prisoners it would be more merciful
To execute at once.

THEODORA There is the sea!
I know that secret passage to the cliff
And the blue hollow at the end. Despatch
Those prisoners; light the passage—I may have
Myself some business there.

PHOCAS If you would trust me
With those offenders, they should find their graves
Within their cells. The stain across the water
Sometimes betrays.

THEODORA Go forth and murder them.
I would I had your task. One as another,
What are these captives to you? Do you ever
Pause at their cries and tremble?

PHOCAS [*with a deep inclination*] I obey.

THEODORA [*pacing the room distractedly*]
With my own hands! He craved it as a boon;
I will not falter. I will take him down

Through the dark rocky fissure to the sea
And bid him leap! But if his corse should rise?
Oh, it were best——

Phocas, for all I said,
Do nothing suddenly. Remain at hand.
This evening, after I have left my rooms
Search them. When all you have to do is done,
Alter the tapestries, let lamps be lit.
With my own hand! This deed must be my own;
I have been left sole mistress of myself
Since I have been myself.

[Exit PHOCAS]

[Re-enter ANTONIA]

ANTONIA The boy is lovely,
Drest in the colours that you love and wearing,
Simply for ornament that broidered cap.
His one thought is to please you. While I sorted
His suit of raiment, he was full of talk—
Oh, your Zuhair, he is the sweetest lad
Was ever born!

THEODORA Zuhair, is that his name?

ANTONIA The youth you loved
And prayed to, doting.

THEODORA How I hate Zuhair!
I will not see the boy; how dare he breathe
A word to any one but me!

ANTONIA I asked
His name and kissed him.

THEODORA I have done that too,
And kissed him after for so sweet a name.

ANTONIA Do not be jealous.

THEODORA He shall die to-night.

ANTONIA He shall not. Theodora, are you mad?

THEODORA Since you have spurred me on!

ANTONIA Come now, what need
Is there to murder him? I have a son,
A son my husband has no mind to slay,
Though he is not his father.

THEODORA Do not speak
Of those old shameful days.

ANTONIA Why, they are here

In living evidence.

THEODORA The sea will wash
All clean to-night : you have condemned the boy.
You think I have such weakness ! Do not come
About me any more.

[Exit ANTONIA, as if some new thought had struck her :

THEODORA *opens the secret door*

Phocas, I said

Not till to-night ; be vigilant and still.

Is the Mage in the palace?

VOICE OF PHOCAS On the spot.

[THEODORA follows PHOCAS an instant, then returns]

THEODORA—This Mage, who always has predicted woe
And peril to the Emperor, if his kingdom
Should ever find an heir.

[*Re-enter ANTONIA with ZUHAIR*]

ANTONIA Madam, the prince

Prays to attend you.

ZUHAIR Empress !

[*He kneels, she holds him up in her arms, going over every point of his dress as she speaks to him*]

THEODORA Have you heard

I keep my courtiers in dark ante-rooms,
Patient for days, before I summon them
Into my presence?

ZUHAIR But I enter it.

Oh, I have been with you so often, seen you
On your great days of state, or when the factions
Were hostile to you. I have heard report
Of your great courage—

THEODORA Has that passed to you?

Do you inherit that?

ZUHAIR How you had rather
Die than survive your honour ; how you find
The throne a glorious sepulchre for kings.
Yes, I inherit all your qualities,
But chief your courage.

THEODORA What! you do not mean—

It is not possible! So mere a boy. . . .

[*Re-enter PHOCAS with MAGE*]

ZUHAIR Mother, your son!

[*Glancing toward MAGE.*] Is there no privacy?

I would enjoy a little time with you.

Let us dismiss these mutes.

THEODORA Take all your will.

ZUHAIR [*to MAGE*] Leave us!

MAGE But I am summoned by the Empress.

ZUHAIR And I, the Empress' son, dismiss you—go!

MAGE *The Empress' son*—then that calamity,

Foretold by mystic science, that the throne

Should be imperilled by a bastard . . .

THEODORA Stay!

I will not bear the insult.

ZUHAIR Comes to pass.

We will avert the danger. [*Going up reverently to the MAGE*]

By all spells,

All magic influence, make the coming hour

Propitious to the sacrifice. [*Exit MAGE. ZUHAIR goes straight up to the Empress and kisses her*]

We lose

Together our ill names when I am dead.

Be firm: ere evening you must be restored

To the great Emperor's love. I have no fear,

I die, not by the executioner,

Not secretly, for we two take together

An open, frank farewell. We have been spoiled

As son and mother; I am just the victim,

And you the priest—the god.

[*Leading her towards her chamber*]

I have learnt little

Of any faith; I knew that for great deeds

One must be still and arm oneself: prepare!

[*He lifts the arras—their eyes meet. THEODORA passes out*]

How terrible it is to be alone

In these wide palaces, I almost shriek

Now I have let her go from me.

For ever,

For ever she is gone ; and I am left
Beside these golden columns. Araby,
With the black tents I love, the neighing horses,
With Gamul, my own horse. . . . What brought me here
I am quite sure she called me in a dream
Across the desert, for I knew her voice
Soon as she spoke ; she will not speak again,
She is grown dumb for ever. Oh, to rush
One instant to the shore and feel the wind !
She is so long in coming.

[*Re-enter* ANTONIA]

Are you there,

My good Antonia ?

ANTONIA Why ?

ZUHAIR There is a service

That you must do for me.

ANTONIA My mistress is—

ZUHAIR Within : go to her.

ANTONIA But I dare not go :

She has forbidden me about her person.

ZUHAIR Go to her, quick ! It is so terrible

To be alone.

ANTONIA But you are gasping.

ZUHAIR Go !

ANTONIA I dare not.

ZUHAIR *Dare not !* Say I have a boon,

That she should dress herself in all her state,

As she comes forth to greet the Emperor,

Her crown a ruby fire, and all her gems.

It is my will.

ANTONIA [*panic-struck*] Give me another message.

Are you a baby, longing to be dazzled

By crowns and gems ? When Theodora wears them

They are lost sight of. She becomes a stranger,

Soon as her hand is on her purple robes,

The kind of stranger that one dare not question

Lest he should be a god. You must not do it ;

You cannot face her in her strength and live.

You think because you dared the guard, and fought

Your way through to the palace—

ZUHAIR [*steadily*] I am changed.

Go to her.

ANTONIA [*with a cry*] Oh, my child!

[*Exit*]

ZUHAIR How I am kindled,

And yet how weak I am; how mere a mortal

Waiting to be consumed. I can but pray

That there may be a moment of clear sight

Before my blood rush in and cover all.

[*Re-enter* ANTONIA]

Where is she? I am dazed.

ANTONIA [*hurriedly*] She cannot come;

She cannot give you up; you must escape

With me, it is her will. Phocas will swear

He flung you from the rocks.

[*She struggles with ZUHAIR; he resists*]

ZUHAIR She laid no charge

Upon me to keep silence?

ANTONIA Not a word!

She is not thinking now about herself,

Her honour.—Oh, she loves you!

ZUHAIR Then you lied,

Saying she bade me fly.

ANTONIA She has not spoken

Except now to dismiss me.

ZUHAIR On what errand?

No base one—I am glad.

ANTONIA She has no weapon—

Prince, if you would not kill her, down the stair!

ZUHAIR [*going to the centre table*]

Here is a weapon. Take it to the Empress;

Tell her, I chose.

ANTONIA This is Justinian's sword.

ZUHAIR Then this is best.

[*Re-enter* THEODORA in imperial array. She stands by the columns rigid. ZUHAIR, turning round sharply, perceives her]

Oh, stay! she is resolved.

[She advances. He looks up at her with one look of terrified worship, then presents the sword]

Now we meet worthily.

[THEODORA takes the sword and stabs him. ANTONIA falls down, and hides her face against the couch]

THEODORA How fast the blood
Keeps flowing, flowing! . . . Now the eyes are blind;
There is a spasm.—Was it not his voice
Cried out a moment back, 'Justinian's sword'?

[Taking the sword from the wound]

It is dyed deep.

 What! do the eyes unclose,
Does speech flow through them?

[She bends over him; he dies; she rises]

 I have fixed a smile

In the dead face. Antonia, cover him!

[THEODORA watches ANTONIA till she has entirely covered the corpse with a rich mantle that has been lying on the couch; then she speaks]

THEODORA Summon the Emperor! *[Exit ANTONIA]*
 So at last Zuhair

The infidel has perished.

[She stands at the right of the corpse. Re-enter JUSTINIAN. She presents the sword]

JUSTINIAN O my strength,
My empire's strength—ours is an equal love.

☛ PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR

by

Sandro Botticelli

a picture recently found



PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR

AFTER A PICTURE BY BOTTICELLI

'CENTAUR, sweet Centaur, let me ride on you !'
 Her face set forward t'ward delightful hours,
 On feet uncertain as spring's dancing showers,
 This Pallas like pale April finds things new ;
 Yet, conscious-half of much forgotten too,
 Asks sparkling questions—tentative of powers
 Visits her doings as bees visit flowers.—
 'Centaur, sweet Centaur, scatter far the dew !
 Round the grey sea, beyond the haunted rocks,
 Crunching clean pebbles call on Magdalen
 And Egypt's Mary clothed in woolly locks ;
 Clamber on clouds to Mary-Mother then,
 Who, virgin still, there in a palace dwells,
 Its roof one silver mass of mellow bells !'

T. STURGE MOORE.

BE IT COSINESS



IN the year of grace 1890, and in the beautiful autumn of that year, I was a freshman at Oxford. I remember how my tutor asked me what lectures I wished to attend, and how he laughed when I said that I wished to attend the lectures of Mr. Walter Pater. Also I remember how, one morning soon after, I went into Ryman's to order some foolish engraving for my room, and there saw, peering into a portfolio, a small, thick, rock-faced man, whose top-hat and gloves of *bright* dog-skin struck one of the many discords in that little city of learning or laughter. The serried bristles of his moustachio made for him a false-military air. Was ever such cunning as twinkled in his narrow eyes? I think I nearly went down when they told me that this was Pater.

Not that even in those more decadent days of my childhood did I admire the man as a stylist. Even then I was angry that he should treat English as a dead language, bored by that sedulous ritual where-with he laid out every sentence as in a shroud—hanging, like a widower, long over its marmoreal beauty or ever he could lay it at length in his book, its sepulchre. From that laden air, the so cadaverous murmur of that sanctuary, I would hook it at the beck of any jade. The writing of Pater had never, indeed, appealed to me, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ, having regard to the couth solemnity of his mind, to his philosophy, his rare erudition, *τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ καλὸν ἐδέγμην*. And I suppose it was when at length I saw him that I first knew him to be fallible.

At school I had read *Marius the Epicurean* in bed and with a dark lantern. Indeed, I regarded it mainly as a tale of adventure, quite as fascinating as *Midshipman Easy*, and far less hard to understand, because there were no nautical terms in it. Marryat, moreover, never made me wish to run away to sea, whilst certainly Pater did make me wish for more 'colour' in the curriculum, for a renaissance of the Farrar period, when there was always 'a sullen spirit of revolt against the authorities'; when lockers were always being broken into and marks falsified and small boys prevented from saying their prayers, inasmuch that they vowed they would no longer buy brandy for their seniors. In some schools, I am told, the pretty old custom of roasting a fourth-form boy, whole, upon Founder's Day still survives. But in my school there

there was less sentiment. I ended by acquiescing in the slow revolution of its wheel of work and play. I felt that at Oxford, when I should be of age to matriculate, a 'variegated dramatic life' was waiting for me. I was not a little too sanguine, alas!

How sad was my coming to the university! Where were those sweet conditions I had pictured in my boyhood? Those antique contrasts? Did I ride, one sunset, through fens on a palfrey, watching the gold reflections on Magdalen Tower? Did I ride over Magdalen Bridge and hear the consonance of evening-bells and cries from the river below? Did I rein in to wonder at the raised gates of Queen's, the twisted pillars of St. Mary's, the little shops, lighted with tapers? Did bull-pups snarl at me, or dons, with bent backs, acknowledge my salute? Any one who knows the place as it is, must see that such questions are purely rhetorical. To him I need not explain the disappointment that beset me when, after being whirled in a cab from the station to a big hotel, I wandered out into the streets. *On aurait dit* a bit of Manchester through which Apollo had once passed; for here, among the hideous trams and the brand-new bricks—here, glared at by the electric-lights that hung from poles, screamed at by boys with the *Echo* and the *Star*—here, in a riot of vulgarity, were remnants of beauty, as I discerned. There were only remnants.

Soon also I found that the life of the place, like the place, had lost its charm and its tradition. Gone were the contrasts that made it wonderful. That feud between undergraduates and dons—latent, in the old days, only at times when it behoved the two academic grades to unite against the townspeople—was one of the absurdities of the past. The townspeople now looked just like undergraduates, and the dons just like townspeople. So splendid was the train-service between Oxford and London that, with hundreds of passengers daily, the one had become little better than a suburb of the other. What more could extensionists demand? As for me, I was disheartened. Bitter were the comparisons I drew between my coming to Oxford and the coming of Marius to Rome. Could it be that there was at length no beautiful environment wherein a man might sound the harmonies of his soul? Had civilisation made beauty, besides adventure, so rare? I wondered what counsel Pater, insistent always upon contact with comely things, would offer to one who could nowhere find them. I had been wondering that very day when I went into Ryman's and saw him there.

When the tumult of my disillusioning was past, my mind grew clearer.

clearer. I discerned that the scope of my quest for emotion must be narrowed. That abandonment of one's self to life, that merging of one's soul in bright waters, so often suggested in Pater's writing, were a counsel impossible for to-day. The quest of emotions must be no less keen, certainly, but the manner of it must be changed forthwith. To unswitch myself from my surroundings, to guard my soul from contact with the unlovely things that compassed it about, therein lay my hope. I must approach the Benign Mother with great caution. And so, while most of the freshmen were doing her honour with wine and song and wreaths of smoke, I stood aside, pondered. In such seclusion I passed my first term—ah, how often did I wonder whether I was not wasting my days, and, wondering, abandon my meditations upon the right ordering of the future! Thanks be to Athene, who threw her shadow over me in those moments of weak folly!

At the end of term, I came to London. Around me seethed swirls, eddies, torrents, violent cross-currents of human activity. What uproar! Certainly I could have no part in modern life—yet, yet for a time it was fascinating to watch the lives of its children. To watch the portentous life of the Prince of Wales fascinated me above all; indeed, it still fascinates me. What 'experience' has been withheld from His Royal Highness? He has hunted elephants through the jungles of India, boar through the forests of Austria, pigs over the plains of Massachusetts. He has marched the Grenadiers to chapel through the white streets of Windsor. He has ridden through Moscow, in strange apparel, to kiss the catafalque of more than one Tzar. From the Castle of Abergeldie he has led his Princess into the frosty night, Highlanders lighting with torches the path to the deer-larder, where lay the wild things that had fallen to him on the crags. For him the Rajahs of India have spoiled their temples, and Blondin has crossed Niagara on the tight-rope, and the Giant Guard done drill beneath the chandeliers of the Neue Schloss. He has danced in every palace of every capital, played in every club. How often has he watched, at Newmarket, the scud-a-run of quivering homuncules over the vert on horses, or, from some night-boat, the burning of great wharves by the side of the Thames; raced through the blue Solent; threaded *les coulisses*! Is he fond of scandal? Lawyers are proud to whisper secrets in his ear. Gallant? The ladies are at his feet. *Ennuyé*? All the wits, from Bernal Osborne to Arthur Roberts, have jested for him. He has been 'present always at the focus where
the

the greatest number of forces unite in their purest energy,' for it is his presence that makes those forces unite.

'*Ennuyé?*' I asked. Indeed he never is. How could he be when Pleasure hangs constantly upon his arm? It is those others, overtaking her only after arduous chase, breathless and footsore, who quickly sicken of her company, and fall fainting at her feet. And for me, shod neither with rank nor riches, what folly to join the chase! I began to see how small a thing it were to sacrifice those external 'experiences,' so dear to the heart of Pater, by a rigid, complex civilisation made so hard to gain. They gave nothing but lassitude to those who had gained them through suffering. Even to the kings and princes, who so easily gained them, what did they yield besides themselves? I do not suppose that, if we were invited to give authenticated instances of intelligence on the part of our royal pets, we could fill half a column of the *Spectator*. In fact, their lives are so full they have no time for thought, the highest energy of man. Now, it was to thought that *my* life should be dedicated. Action, apart from its absorption of time, would war otherwise against the pleasures of intellect, which, for me, meant mainly the pleasures of imagination. It is only (this is a platitude) the things one has not done, the faces or places one has not seen, or seen but darkly, that have charm. It is only mystery—such mystery as besets the eyes of children—that makes things superb. I thought of the voluptuaries I had known—they seemed so sad, so ascetic almost, like poor pilgrims, raising their eyes never or ever gazing at the moon of tarnished endeavour. I thought of the round, insouciant faces of the monks at whose monastery I once broke bread, and how their eyes sparkled when they asked me of the France that lay around their walls. I thought, *pardie*, of the lurid verses written by young men who, in real life, know no haunt more lurid than a literary public-house. It was, for me, merely a problem how I could best avoid 'sensations,' 'pulsations,' and 'exquisite moments' that were not purely intellectual. I was not going to attempt to run both kinds together, as Pater seemed to fancy a man might. I would make myself master of some small area of physical life, a life of quiet, monotonous simplicity, exempt from all outer disturbance. I would shield my body from the world that my mind might range over it, not hurt nor fettered. As yet, however, I was in my first year at Oxford. There were many reasons that I should stay there and take my degree, reasons that I did not combat. Indeed, I was content to wait for my life.

And

And now that I have made my adieux to the Benign Mother, I need wait no longer. I have been casting my eye over the suburbs of London. I have taken a most pleasant little villa in —ham, and here I shall make my home. Here there is no traffic, no harvest. Those of the inhabitants who do anything go away each morning and do it elsewhere. Here no vital forces unite. Nothing happens here. The days and the months will pass by me, bringing their sure recurrence of quiet events. In the spring-time I shall look out from my window and see the laburnum flowering in the little front garden. In summer cool syrups will come for me from the grocer's shop. Autumn will make the boughs of my mountain-ash scarlet, and, later, the asbestos in my grate will put forth its blossoms of flame. The infrequent cart of Buzzard or Mudie will pass my window at all seasons. Nor will this be all. I shall have friends. Next door, there is a retired military man who has offered, in a most neighbourly way, to lend me his copy of the *Times*. On the other side of my house lives a charming family, who perhaps will call on me, now and again. I have seen them sally forth, at sundown, to catch the theatre-train; among them walked a young lady, the charm of whose figure was ill concealed by the neat waterproof that overspread her evening dress. Some day it may be . . . but I anticipate. These things will be but the cosy accompaniment of my days. For I shall contemplate the world.

I shall look forth from my window, the laburnum and the mountain-ash becoming mere silhouettes in the foreground of my vision. I shall look forth and, in my remoteness, appreciate the distant pageant of the world. Humanity will range itself in the columns of my morning paper. No pulse of life will escape me. The strife of politics, the intriguing of courts, the wreck of great vessels, wars, dramas, earthquakes, national griefs or joys; the strange sequels to divorces, even, and the very mysterious suicides of land-agents at Ipswich,—in all such phenomena I shall steep my exhaurient mind. *Delicias quoque bibliothecae experiar.* Tragedy, comedy, chivalry, philosophy will be mine. I shall listen to their music perpetually and their colours will dance before my eyes. I shall soar from terraces of stone upon dragons with shining wings and make war upon Olympus; from the peaks of hills I shall swoop into recondite valleys and drive the pigmies to their caverns; wander through infinite parks wherein the deer rest or wander at will; whisper with prophets under the elms, or bind children with daisy-chains, or, with a lady, thread my way through the acacias. I shall swim

swim down rivers into the sea and outstrip all ships. Unhindered I shall penetrate all sanctuaries and snatch the secrets of every dim confessional.

Yes! among books that charm, and give wings to the mind, will my days be spent. I shall be ever absorbing the things great men have written; with such experience I will charge mind to the full. Nor will I try to give anything in return. Once, in the delusion that Art, loving the recluse, would make his life happy, I wrote a little for a yellow quarterly—and had that *succès de fiasco* which is always given to a young writer of talent. But the stress of creation soon overwhelmed me. Only Art with a capital H gives any consolations to her henchmen. And I, who crave no knighthood, shall write no more. I shall write no more. Already I feel myself to be a trifle outmoded. I belong to the Beardsley period. Younger men, with months of activity before them, with fresher schemes and notions, with newer enthusiasm, have pressed forward since then. *Cedo junioribus*. Indeed, I stand aside with no regret. For to be outmoded is to be a classic, if one has written well. I have acceded to the hierarchy of good scribes and rather like my niche.

MAX BEERBOHM.

SOHEIL



OHEIL is the Arabic name of the star Canopus, to which a curious belief attaches. It appears that in some fashion known alone to Allah, the fate of the Arab race is bound up with the star. Where it sheds its light their empire flourishes, and only there. Why this is so even faith is powerless to explain, but so it is.

Doubts and questionings, changes of costume and religion, striving for ideals, improvements, telegraphs and telephones, are well enough for Christians, whose lives are passed in hurry and in hunting after gold. For those who have changed but little for the last two thousand years, in dress, in faith and customs, it is enough to know that Soheil is a talismanic star. Let star-gazers and those who deal in books, dub the star Alpha (or Beta), Argo, it is all one to Arabs. If you question knowledge, say the Easterns, it ceases to be knowledge. If this is so, the empiric method has much to answer for. Knowledge, and virtue, and a horse's mouth, should not pass through too many hands. Even argument itself, that argument which is almost deified in latter days, when applied too roughly, takes off authenticity from knowledge, as the bloom of peaches falls from rubbing in a basket.

Of one thing there can be no doubt whatever. When in the Yemen, ages before the first historian penned the fable known as history, the Arabs, watching their flocks, observed Soheil, it seems to have struck them as a star unlike all others.

Al Makkari writes of it on several occasions. The Dervish Abderahman Sufi of Rai in his *Introduction to the Starry Heavens* remarks that at the feet of the Soheil is seen, in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, 'a curious white spot.' The 'curious white spot' astronomers have thought to be the greater of the two Magellan clouds. Perhaps it is so, but I doubt if the Arabs, as a race, were concerned about the matter, so long as they saw the star. From wandering, warring tribes, Mohammed made a nation of them. Mohammed died, and joined the wife in paradise of whom he said, 'by Allah, she shall sit at my right hand, because when all men laughed, she clave to me.' Then came Othman, Ali, and the rest, and led them into other lands; to Irak, Damascus, El Hind, to Ifrikia, lastly to Spain, and still their empire waxed

THE WHITE WATCH
by
Charles H. Shannon

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waxed even across the 'Black Waters' of the seas, and still Soheil was there to shine upon them. In the great adventure, one of the few in which a people has adventured, when first Tarik landed his Berbers on the rock which bears his name; at the battle on the Guadalete, where the King Don Roderick disappeared from the eyes of men, leaving his golden sandals by a stream; to Seville, Cortuba, and Murcia, the land of Trodmir Ben Gobdos to which the Arabs gave the name of Masr, right up to Zaragoza, Soheil accompanied the host. A curious host it must have been with Muza riding on a mule and with but two-and-twenty camels to carry all its baggage. Thence to Huesca of the Bell, where King Ramiro, at the instigation of good Abbot Frotardo (a learned man), cut off his nobles' heads when they had come to give him their advice about the celebrated bell, to be heard all over Aragon, across the Pyrenees to France, to the spot in Aquitaine whence Muza sent to Rome to tell the Pope he was about to come and take him by the beard in the name of God. Then the wise men who always march with armies, looking aloft at night, declared the star was lost. Although they smote the Christian dogs, taking their lands, their daughters, horses and gold, on several occasions as Allah willed it, yet victory was not so stable as in Spain. Perhaps, beyond the mountains, their spirits fell from lack of sun.

When the conquering tide had spent itself and flowed back into Spain, at Zaragoza, almost the first Moorish state that rose to eminence was founded. Al Makkari writes that at that time Soheil was visible in Upper Aragon, but very low on the horizon. Again the Christians conquered, and the royal race of Aben Hud fled from the city. Ibn Jaldun relates that, shortly after, Soheil became invisible from Zaragoza. The Cid, Rodrigo Diaz, he of Vivar (may God remember him), prevailed against Valencia, and from thence the star, indignant, took its departure. And so of Jativa, Beni Carlo, and Alpuixech.

Little by little, Elche with its palm woods, and even Murcia, bade it good-bye, as one by one, in the course of the struggle, prolonged for centuries, the Christians in succession conquered southward. At last, the belief gained ground that, only at one place in Spain, called from the circumstance, Soheil, could it be seen. At Fuengirola, between Malaga and Marbella, exists the little town the Arabs called Soheil, lost amongst sand, looking across at Africa, of which it seems to form a part; cactus, olive, cane, and date palms form the vegetation; in summer, hot as Bagdad, in winter sheltered from the winds which come from

from Christendom by the sierras of the Alpujarra and Segura. Surely there, the star would stop and let the Arab power remain to flourish under its influence. There, for centuries, did it stand stationary. The City of the Pomegranate was founded, the Alhambra, the Generalife, the brilliant Court; the poets, travellers, and men of science, gathered at Granada, Córdoba and at Seville. Al Motacim, the poet king of Córdoba, planted the hills with almond trees to give the effect of snow, which Romaiquia longed for. He wrote his *Kasidas*, and filled the courtyard full of spices and sugar for his queen to trample on, when she saw the women of the brick-makers kneading the clay with naked feet, and found her riches but a burden. Averroes and Avicenna, the doctors of medicine and of law, laid down their foolish rules of practice and of conduct, and all went well. Medina-el-Azahara, a pile of stones where shepherds sleep and make believe to watch their sheep, where once the Caliph entertained the ambassador from Constantinople and showed him the basin full of quicksilver 'like a great ocean,' rose from the arid hills, and seemed eternal. Allah appeared to smile upon his people, and in proof of it let his star shine. Jehovah, though, was jealous. A jealous God, evolved by Jews and taken upon trust by Christians, could not endure the empire of the Arabs.

Again, town after town was conquered—Baeza, Loja, Antequera, Guadix, and Velez Malaga, even to Alhama, 'Woe is me, Alhama'; lastly Granada. Then came the kingdom of the Alpujarra, with the persecutions and the rebellions—Arabs and Christians fighting like wolves, and torturing one another for the love of their respective gods. The fighting over, tradition said that at Fuengirola the talisman yet was in view, and whilst it still was seen, there still was hope. A century elapsed, and from Gibraltar—from the spot where first they landed—the last Moors embarked. In Spain, where once they ruled from Iaca to Tarifa, no Moor was left. Perhaps about the mountain villages of Ronda a few remained, for, even to this day, the peasants use the Arab word 'Eywah' for 'yes' in conversation. But they were not the folk to think of stars or legends, so no one (of the true) faith could tell if Soheil still lingered over Spain.

Trains, telegraphs with bicycles and phonographs, adulterated foods, elections, elementary schools, and other herbage (*otras yerbas*), give a sort of superficial air of Europe to the land. The palm trees, cactus, canes, and olives; the tapia walls, the women's walk and eyes, the songs and dances, the Paso Castellano of the horses, the

Andujar

Andujar pottery, the norias, and the air of fatalism over all, give them the lie direct.

The truth is, that the empire of the Arabs, though fled in fact, retains its influence. The hands that built the mosque at Córdoba, the Giralda, the Alhambra, and almost every parish church in Southern Spain are gone; their work is mouldering or struggling with the restorer; and yet from every ruined aqueduct and mosque they seem to beckon to the Christian as if derisively. The reason, is it not set forth at length by economists, ethnographers, tourists, and by those whose business it is to write, for people who know nothing, of things they do not understand themselves? The real reason is, because at Cadiz Soheil is still in sight, though making southward day by day and night by night. That is why Spain is still an eastern country, and why the ways of Europe have no real hold upon her. Let her take heart of grace, the precession of the equinoxes will put things right.

In the dull future, when stucco is our only wear with Harris-tweeds and macintoshes, when Juan shall be as Pedro, Pedro as John or Hans or Pierre, and all apparelled in one livery; when trains shall run up every hill, and Volapuk be spoken from Hammerfest to Cartagena, Soheil will cross the straits, and all go as it should in Spain, as now it does in England, where gloom obscures all stars. There still remains Ifrikia; at Mequinez and Fez, and in the little towns which nestle in the 'falda' of the Atlas amongst the cedar forests, it may be that even the equinoxes may have mercy on Soheil, and let it rest.

Long may it shine there, and shine upon the wild old life, upon the horseman flying across the sands, upon the weddings where the women raise the curious cry of joy which pierces ears and soul, upon the solemn stately men who sit and look at nothing all a summer's day, upon the animals so little separated from their owners, and upon the ocean which is called the desert.

In the Sahara, Soheil will shine for ever upon the life as in the times of the Mualakat when first the rude astronomers observed the star, and framed the legend on some starry night all seated on the ground.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

THE END

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